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*Luella Corbell Fickett*

# Kunnoo Sperits and Others

BY

LASALLE CORBELL PICKETT

[MRS. GENERAL GEORGE E. PICKETT]

Author of "Pickett and His Men," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

M. MUEDEN AND WILL H. CHANDLEE

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In de Miz Series—Volume I

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Lovingly dedicated  
to  
My boy and his boys



## P R E F A C E

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THE art of printing, in bringing to the world much that is good, robbed it of a beauty that can never be restored — the priceless traditions of primitive races. In the Golden Age a story descended from father to son through all generations from a beginning in a past so remote that its origin was lost in dim antiquity. With the passage of the years it mellowed and deepened and grew vivid with sunlight as a cask of wine that lies through dim ages in a vault will hold to its heart the glow of the sun that warmed it into

life when it hung upon the vine, until it crystalizes into liquid jewels.

The endless succession of pictures presented to the mind widens the horizon but lowers the zenith and limits the nadir. The permanence which gave majesty to the tradition is superseded by the evanescence of the new thought which shimmers for a moment upon the world only to pass away when a new idea shall have been evolved.

The tradition is garbed in its own peculiar form of speech. The idea and the expression linger together with the primitive races until advancing civilization with its subtle devices of writing, printing and reading has invaded the realm where poetry and imagination still dwell in the twilight of the gods and has destroyed, first, the original concept, and then more gradually the peculiar idiom in which that concept was draped.

The African races have retained their ancient tales up to, or even beyond, the incursions of progress into the domain of the primitive mythologies. Their traditions preserve the invariableness of an antique statue upon which succeeding generations look with admiration and delight, but which never lifts an eyelid nor changes a pose in recognition of the changing fashions of the day. "En he put his foot dar," says a youthful and inexperienced raconteur. "No, no, chile," hastily corrects the gray-haired sire, "He put his foot yer." The story can not proceed until the foot is put "yer," as it always has been since the beginning.

When an ambitious master of the newly evolved arts fancies that he has discovered that the foot was put "dar" instead of "yer" he is regarded as a savant of great glory, and the whole intellectual and



scientific world thereafter sees that member in its newly authorized position, and if any man dares behold it anywhere else he is immediately relegated to barbarism. The primitive African mind regards an effort to change the location of that traditional foot as heretical and profane. Thus with each minor incident and movement in the entire story.

The philosophy of the old-time African servitor was of the most consoling character. He preached the gospel of contentment, perhaps as divine as any other principle of the moral law, comforting in this manner those who railed against their limitations :

“You 'bleeged ter be satusfied wid w'at you's got. Nobody hain't got ebbyt'ing in dis worl'. Now, dar's de lightnin' bug, he hain't got no stinger. En dar's de moskeeter, he hain't got no lamp.

You see, dey kyan' bofe hab de same t'ing."

To us who learned the dialect of the old-time slave with the first lispings of our untrained tongues, there has come no other language to usurp its place in our hearts. It is a part of the sunlight of childhood, the radiance of which yet lights our pathway to the ever-nearing west. It belongs with the joy of youth, like the fragrance of the flowers that bloomed in the old home garden and the trill of the birds that made melody for us in the days when the world was full of music, before we had remotely dreamed that time would set the song of our lives to minor chords and that our joyous lyrics of welcome for the living would sometime change to dirges of farewell to the dead.

We of the old-time South are far away from the nights of mystic fascination when, with the curiosity of keen-eyed,

sharp-eared childhood, sitting in the deepening gloom of twilight, watching the sparks from the flaming logs go glittering up the chimney, wondering what message from the glowing heart of the fire they carried up to the pale stars, we listened to some awesome tradition from the lips of an old white-haired "Uncle," a relic of his own childhood and of many childhoods previous to his. Or it might be some pathetic story of his own experience that would chain us there until nurse came for the little ones, and earnest admonitions from parents or guardians would warn older young people that further indulgence would not be granted.

We have read many a popular novel since then, many a scientific treatise artistically veiled in iridescent romanticism for the ensnaring of the unwary, many a sociological dissertation cunningly done into fiction to render it

palatable to our frivolous tastes, but never have we met with such enchanting literary works as those which beguiled the mystic evenings of plantation childhood.

I have made my dialect, if I may so call it, phonetically genuine. The final consonant is rarely sounded. Short words and possessives are slighted, and the constant elision, though musical, makes it difficult. "R" is generally pronounced "ah"—"Spare," "spyah," etc.

The negroes are fond of long words often making a misapplication of them. "Reverent," for instance, they use for "violent" or "excessive." "Stronagin" is another favorite expression, which combines the words "extraordinary," "astounding," "strong," and "strange." "Projeckin'" is yet another, which means not only to fool or play with, to

presume to interfere with, but to take an unjustifiable, unwarranted liberty with.

They use many obsolete words, such as "deracinate," "ineluctable," and many Anglo-Saxon forms, such as "hit" for "it," "tote" for "carry," and "atter" for "after," and double negatives always; such as, "You hain't seen nobody 'roun' yer w'at don' want ter hire nobody, is you?"

I have tried to portray their quaint and homely humor, their strange exaltation of mind and temperament, their pathetic and sympathetic natures, their superstitions and sentiments, their strange characteristics. They like generally to make the weaker side victorious, mischief to triumph over malice, and helplessness a virtue.

They are peculiarly reticent about certain things. They seldom speak freely to a stranger, and never relate their

---

legends to one whom they do not know well.

Herbert H. Smith, author of "Brazil and the Amazons," ascribes the origin of many of their stories to the South American Indians,—but where did our negro come in contact with them? The Visconde de Rio Branco, the Brazilian historian, proved a relationship between them and the ancient Egyptians and Tupi Indians. The animal stories and legends were certainly, however, brought from Africa, but whether they originated there or with the Anahs, or with yet older nations, is unknown. Whether the Indians got them from the negroes or from earlier sources is also unknown. "Br'er Rabbit" can be traced back to the stories of the Buddha. The Buddhists regarded the hare always with the greatest possible veneration, and Jataka is but the Tar Baby story revived.

The negro has no linguistic laws. He imitates as best he can what he hears. He does not originate, but his imitations are often so grotesque, and so far from the actual thing which he is attempting to imitate, as to pass among unaccustomed hearers as original expressions evolved from his own consciousness. His dialect varies, also, with climate and geographical locality. The speech of Virginia is not exactly like that of many other Southern States, and the lingo in vogue on the rice plantations of the Sea Islands of the South Atlantic States and the dialect of the wheat fields and cotton plantations have a very marked difference.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the old-time Southern blacks was a gentleness of voice which seemed to have persisted through all the generations which had intervened between them and their origin in a languorous oriental

country. The pathetic sweetness which made the old plantation melodies the most touching music known to western ears was no less noticeable in their conversational tones. With a tropical softness of nature they instinctively avoided all harsh sounds, sometimes to the infinite mystification of unaccustomed minds. In their smooth phraseology, "eider-down" was readily converted into "iodine" without the interposition of any scientific process known to chemistry.

This pathetically musical speech is fast dying away with the old-time slave, the old-time master, the old-time life. To one in whose memory it yet lingers in softest cadences it is a pleasant task to jot down all of it that can be transferred to the printed page. The characteristic tones will not remain, the quaint expression is lacking, the half unconscious gestures, the mystic swayings to and fro,



will all vanish with the actors in the old plantation drama. There will yet linger only the silent printed form to convey to the future some idea of the olden dialect, when the western gate shall have swung open for the last of those to whom that speech was a loved familiar sound, and they who told the quaint old stories and they who listened shall all alike have passed into the glory beyond the sunset.

LASALLE CORBELL PICKETT.

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*"'Twuz a long time ago."*

# KUNNOO SPERITS AND OTHERS

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## IN DE MIZ

WILL those of my readers who do not know the ways and hearts of my colored people of the Old South kindly read first this explanation, or extenuation, as it may be, of my old black mammy's origin of her race?

As I wrote "In de Miz" memory took me back across the years to the time when life's water was wine, tinted golden with the sunlight of morning, sparkling with the jewels of youth and love. It made me a child

again, looking up into the dear, dusky face of that beloved black mammy, listening with my unhurt, unclouded faith to the folklore of her speculative midnight race, as she solved in her own random, shadowy way the dim mysteries of creation, giving expression to thoughts that strike reason dumb, while her passiveness, obedience, wise submission, loyalty and love made no quiritation of wrongs to right.

There was no word held in more reverential love and fear by the faithful Southern slave than the one word "Master." The divided service of his soul was between his Master and his God. His religion, fraught with the supernatural, was as broad as the narrow grasp of his poor mind could com-

pass. His conception of the greatness of God was measured by his crude and untrained brain.

In his eyes the taking of a "chaw" of tobacco was a dignified, luxurious custom, and one liberally indulged in, as a rule, by his paragon of perfection, the Southern master.

To have said "Lawd," in speaking of Him to little children, without the prefix of the word "Marse" (Master) would have been unwonted familiarity with the omnipotent, all-wise, all-merciful Great Being. Nor was the old-time slave wanting in respect and reverence in the frequent use of His Name when speaking to those of his own age, always calling upon it to emphasize or verify a statement or express surprise.



There was no want of reverence in his comparison of his Heavenly Father with his earthly Master, and the rapt co-partnership which he conceived to exist between those two almost equally sacred beings; but, instead thereof, a sublime recognition in his simple heart of the fellowship of God and man, and an intuitive conception of two-ness as one-ness, of the incompleteness of man apart from God—verifying the poet's thought :

“ So close is glory to our dust ;  
So near is God to man.”

“DREED, Honey, hit is de gospel trufe, leas'wise dat's de way I yearn hit tole, en I hain't nebber yearn hit 'sputed. 'Tain't no use er deze yer niggers bein' so a'rified 'bout hit, needer. En w'at I yearn you gits straight jes' lak I yearn hit, en dat is—Dat ef'twan't fer de w'ite folks dar wouldn' be *no niggers*, dat is, dar wouldn' be none ter year tell er.

“'Twuz a long time ago, way in de beginnin', w'en dar wan't no fundament en no plantashuns, en dar wa'n't but jes' only one pusson a libin' ober yer den, en He wuz Marse Jesus' Pa. En He, mun! wa'n't only de goodes' en de gre'tes', de outnes' en mos' surwiguses, but He wuz de mos' stronges', mos'

swiffes' pusson ebber wuz. Ebbyt'ing den wuz His'n, en dough He wuz dat rich en had so much persesshuns b'longin' ter 'im, He could tu'n His han' en mek anyt'ing He sot His min' 'pon—en mek hit out er nuttin', at dat.

“De firs' en fo'mus' t'ing He meked dough wuz His bes', en co'se hit ought ter be, w'en you comes ter dat, kaze 'twuz His own home—Heaben.

“Atter dat He meked de ye'th en de sea en all dat 'In de Miz,' en den res'ed Hisse'f de Sebeuf day en hal- lowed hit.

“But dar hain't nobody nebber yeard nuttin' 'tall 'bout dem t'ings dat's 'In de Miz.' Fer, you see, 'twuz lak dis, w'en Marse Lawd sp'iled anyt'ing He wuz a mekin' er, no matter w'at-some-



ebber hit wuz, He flung hit ret smack 'In de Miz,' kaze ef He hadn', He couldn' a said w'en He wuz done en thoo wid all His wuk dat 'He saw 'twuz good.' Well, hit wuz gittin' to'ds de een' er de week en moughty nigh on ter Sunday, en Marse Lawd 'gun ter study 'bout w'at He wuz gwine ter mek naix en a 'terminin' in His min' w'ile He wuz a studdyin' dat His las' piece er wuk should out-shine all de yudder pieces. Well, w'ile He wuz mekin' up His min' en ponderin' 'bout w'at 'twould be, He tuck de pail en went 'long ter de well ter draw some water, w'en jes' 'fo' He let de bucket down, lo-en-beholes! He seed Hisse'f 'flected. Ez soon ez ebber He got ober His 'miration en 'stonishment at de moughty grangerments en

grannificents er de han'some, bufeful  
'flection dat He seed a layin' dar flat on  
de top er de deep, cool, smoober water,  
He stop studdyin' en t'inkin' en 'low  
dat, ez long ez He tu'nt out so many  
good jobs, He b'leebed He 'd try en  
juplicate dat lakness dat He jes' seed  
'flected er Hisse'f.

“ Den I s'pose He t'ink, too, w'en  
He look 'roun' 'im, en seed all de lan's  
en chatt'l 'state en yudder prop'ty dat  
b'longs ter 'im dat hit's a moughty po'  
bee dat don' mek mo' honey dan he  
wants fer hisse'f. But dat's needer yer  
ner needer dar, fer 'twan't mo' dan  
'cided 'tween Hisse'f en His own min'  
'fo' He stop foolin' en lookin' at Hisse'f  
en tuck en drawed de water up quick,  
en went 'long in a trot en ondo de  
wuk-shop do' en git out His tools

ag'in, en tuck some er de ve'y ye'th whar He meked a We'n'sday, en rollt up His sleebes en shobed His hat back offn His forehead, tuck a chaw er terbacker en went ter wuk. En den en dar He meked a couple er In-'iz-Images, meked 'em jes' lak de one He seed 'flected in de well (He allers meked two er de same kin' er t'ing, you know), en He meked dem In-'iz-Images perzackly fer de worl' jes' lak He wuz Hisse'f—jes' ez purty, en jes' ez fat en plump, en jes' ez lakly lookin', too. Kaze de Lawd ain't got nar' sumptious, stingyfied, jealousome bone in His whole body.

“ Bimeby, atter He git thoo, He call Marse Gabe, dat wuz His oberseer, de haid man 'bout de place w'at bosses de han's, en tole 'im ter g'long fotch

de w'eelbarr' en tek bofe dem dar In-'iz-Images en sot 'em in de sun whar dey could be a dryin' derese'fs. Dey wa'n't name mens w'en Marse Gabe firs' seed 'em, dey wuz name In-'iz-Images, you know, 'twel atter dey'd dried derese'fs.

“Well, suh, de way Marse Gabe open his eyes en mek 'miration w'en he seed w'at he did see, gin 'im pop eyes fer de res' er his life, but he knowed his place, dough, en he ain't say nuttin', sep'n jes' ter totch his hat en scrope his foots en bow his haid, kaze he wuz moughty aspeckful, en say, sezze : 'Yas, suh ; yas, suh.'

“Den Marse Gabe tuck up de two In-'iz-Images jes' ez keerful ez he kin, but he wuz skeered er 'em, dough, en tarrified widin a inch er his life, leas'-

wise his knees wuz moughty sheky en he had a moughty funny feelin' in de nayberhood er his gizzard (ef he wa'n't skeered en tarrified), but he tuck 'em, dough, en lay 'em down easy en mil' in de bottom er de w'eelbarr'; den he spit in his han's en amble off in a kind er pace-trot-ca-pluck-a-te-pluck, ca-pluck-a-te-pluck, ontwel he comed up 'long side er de apple dryer, whar de sun wuz hottes'. Den he tuck 'em out, jes' ez gingerly en keerful ez ef dey'd been a pyar er sneks, en sot 'em up 'g'inst de behime side er de apple dryer en lef' 'em, den went 'long 'boutn his yudder bizness—a sorter foolin' en dallyin' roun' ontwel his Marser lay down ter tek His nap lak He mos' in gen'ally do ebby ebenin'.

“His Marser wa'n't 'feared er ober-



'sleepin' Hisse'f, needer. Nor, suh !  
He knowed p'intedly dat He wuz gwine  
ter wek up perzackly ter de ve'y minit  
dat His In-'iz-Images wuz dry 'nuff fer  
'im ter wuk on ag'in, w'ich He did,  
sho-nuff.

“Den He call Marse Gabe en tole  
'im fer ter g'long en fetch dem In-'iz-  
Images fer 'im ter put some bref in, en  
finish up. Marse Gabe tuck off his hat  
ag'in, pull his fo'lock en scrope his ret  
foots back'ards en bow low, jes' lak he  
did 'fo', en say, 'Yas, Suh,' en amble  
off ag'in wid de w'eelbarr', ca-pluck-  
a-te-pluck. But lawz-er-mussy 'pon  
us ! W'en Marse Gabe git ter de place  
whar he knowed he lef' dem In-'iz-  
Images, dar wa'n't but one er 'em dar.  
He look ebbywhar, but 'tain't no use,  
he kyan' fin' but jes' byarly de one dat


he seed w'en he firs' driv hisse'f up. He look en he look en he look, den he scotch his haid, en studdy, en look ag'in, monst'ous pestered 'boutn hit, too, en a wukkin' his thunkin' machine for all he knowed.

“He fotch bofe, en dar wa'n't but one—en w'ile he wuz a kalkulatin' how dat could a poserble happen, w'edder some er dem varments, er beasteses, er cropin' t'ings dat wuz meked dat same Saddy mawnin' could er kotch de missin' one, en wuz a jawin' ter hisse'f en a sayin' dat folks w'ats allers pesterin' en bodderin' 'long w'at ain't dar'n en w'at dey hain't got no bizness wid, ought ter nebber come ter no good een', en needer ought beasteses en varments ez ter dat, no mo' dan real pussons; en w'ile he wuz

a jawin' en a lookin' he yeard Marse Lawd's voice a callin' out loud :

“ ‘Gabe, G-a-b-e ; you-u-u Gabe, come 'long dar wid you, you lazy roskal, you ! W'at you trollopin' 'long dar fer, suh, a was'in' all my time ? You gwine ter tek all day ter fetch my wuk ter me, suh ? You better come 'long 'fo' you fin' out who is w'ich, en w'ich is who !’

“Marse Gabe tromble all ober lak a askin leaf, but he knowed he ain't got no time ter fool 'long dat losted one no mo' ; he knowed he wuz 'bleeged ter git up en git. So he tuck de one dat wuz lef' en tuck hisse'f off en kyard 'im 'long jes' ez fas' ez he kin trot. He wuz fyarly kivered wid mud en moughty nigh out er win' w'en he brung up 'longside er de wuk-shop en hist 'im out.



“En I tell you he lay moughty low, en hain't say nuttin' 'tall 'bout de yudder one whar he couldn' fin', kaze he thunk mebbe Marse Lawd mought er fergit Hisse'f 'bout dar bein' two er 'em, but He didn'. No, mun! dat He didn'.

“W'y, dey say dat Marse Lawd is dat 'tickular, dat He tuck a count er all de sparrows en number de ve'y hyars er dar haid w'en He meked 'em. En w'en He seed dar wa'n't but one er de In-'iz-Images whar He'd jes' done en meked He cl'ared up His th'oat, en talk biggerty, jes' lak He did once 'fo', long time atter dis time, dough. Dey wuz out er do's den in de gyarden, in de cool er de day, en 'twuz dat same day dey said dat Marse Adam en his wife hid derese'fs, en dey say, too, dat dat time you could year His voice a walkin'.

“Well, He crowded His eyebrows up tergedder, sorter shet up bofe eyes kinder surwigus en fierce lak, en said, sezze: ‘Boy! Whar is dat yudder one?’ Marse Gabe look moughty sheepish en slunk back’ards. ‘Twuz tetch-en-go, mun! wid ‘im, I tell you. So he spuck moughty humble en feeble lak, en say, ‘Wuz dar two er ‘em?’ Well, de wu’d wa’n’t mo’ dan out er his mouf, w’en he seed ‘twan’t no use projeckin’ wid Marse Lawd, kaze, ‘twix de bug en de bee-martin, ‘tain’t hard ter tell w’ich is gwine ter git kotch,’ so he up en tell all ‘bout hit, how ‘ticular he wuz, how he sot bofe er ‘em down tergedder, tetchin’ wunner-nudder, sides by sides, en how he went ‘long den, ‘tendin’ ter his yudder bizness, en how dat w’en he

come 'long back ag'in ter fetch 'em  
bofe jes' lak he wuz tole dar wa'n't  
but jes' byarly *one* ter behole, en he  
'low dat he wuz gwine ter keep on a  
lookin', dough, ontwel he'd foun' de  
yudder one, w'en he yeard hisse'f  
called.

“Den Marse Lawd look 'diguant,  
His woice ro', de ye'th shuck, en He  
'spon' out loud: 'Gabe, Gabe, go  
fetch dat yudder missin' one.' Den  
Marse Gabe say, jes' lak de patter-  
roller wuz behime 'im, 'Yas, Suh, I  
gwine ret 'long, Suh,' en he huddle  
hisse'f up tergedder sorter skittish, lak  
he wuz a dodgin' sump'n, en went  
'long back en tuck all de pains he kin.  
He look firs' one side en den de yudder,  
den he bat his eyes en hong his haid  
down moneful en perjected, en wuz jes'

gwine ter gin up de s'arch, en hump hisse'f en g'long back en git w'at he knowed dar wuz fer 'im, w'en he onbat his eyes en drapped 'em down en looked, en, lo-en-beholes ! dar crouched all up in a lump ker-flap 'pon de groun' wuz dat yudder missin' one. W'y, a li'l' mo' en Marse Gabe would er trompled on 'im.

“Den he 'skivered dat he wuz bu'nt brack es a coal, mouf wide open, w'ite teef a shinin' en jambya poun' er wool on his haid whar de sun done all kink up. 'Fas' asleep, too, I 'clar' ter grashus,' sezzee. I s'poze he'd done git ter noddin' en fall ober, er he mought er git kotch wid a emptiness in de pit er de stummuck a hoanin' atter sump'n t' eat. But anyhow, dar he wuz, jes' lak I tell you, en some




folks do say, dat dat's de 'kazion er niggers bein' so sleepy haided ter dis day, dat dey wuz meked dat-a-way *at firs'*. Well, Marse Gabe he crope down on his all-fo's en tuck de po' brack t'ing up en put 'im in de w'eel-barr', en amble off ag'in en kyar 'im 'long ter Marse Lawd jes' ez fas' ez he kiu trot, ca-pluck-a-te-pluck, ca-pluck-a-te-pluck.

“Now, den, w'en Marse Lawd look en seed dat His wuk wuz all sp'iled en ruint, dat de sun had done en bu'nt hit ez brack ez a charcoal, He shuck His haid, en bat His eyes, en tu'n up His nose kinder disgustin' lak, en say: 'He ain't wuff foolin' away my time wid, en a boderin' ober, so tek 'im, Gabe—tek 'im, en g'long en fling 'im “In de Miz.”’



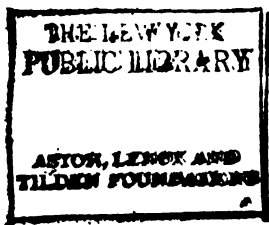
“By dat time Marse Lawd wuz done en thoo wid polishin’ up en puttin’ bref in dat firs’ one, en you know, mun! he wuz a-stan’in’ up dar ’long side er Marse Lawd lookin’ pariently lak he thunk he wuz in a crowd, wid his han’s in his britches-pocket, hat cocked on one side, smokin’ a seegyar. En he wuz talkin’ moughty uppity en moughty familyus lak ter Marse Lawd, too. Yas, suh! jes’ lak he wuz somebody considerbul a’ready, a puttin’ on a’rs en a wigglin’ de ashes off’n de een’ er his seegyar wid his li’l’ finger. En mo’ dan dat, suh; he tuck en bodaciously open up de confab *hisse’f* wid Marse Lawd ’bout his po’ bu’nt pardner whar wuz a lyin’ dar in de bottom er de w’eelbarr’ en whar in a minit mo’ en Marse Gabe would er had ’im



flung smack 'In de Miz,' en spuck up en say, jes' ez 'sumptious, too, ez you please, bowin' en a smilin' en twis'in' his merstach : 'Ah!'skuze me, Lawd, 'skuze me,' sezzee, 'but, ah—don' 'stroy 'im, please ; don' fling'im "In de Miz"; ah—go on—go on en finish 'im up, en gi' 'im ter me ter wait on me.'

"En so de Lord did. He retched ret up, en git His kya'vin' knife down ag'in, en kya'ved offn de looses' er de bu'nt po'tions en den tuck some san' paper en polish 'im, en fix 'im up de bes' He kin outn a bad job, en gin 'im ter de w'ite man ter wait on 'im. Dey named 'im 'Nigger,' kaze dey spuck de Greek fore'n langwidge in dem days, en brack wuz 'nigger.' En Marse Lawd gin dis nigger In-'iz-Image ter de w'ite man ter wait on 'im den in

de ve'y beginnin' en he's been a waitin' on 'im ebber sence, fum dat time forre'd ontwel dis present day. En hit's one er deze yer jobs w'ats gwine ter las' a long time—yas, suh, jes' ez long ez de Ham-begats kin Ham-begat mo' Ham-begats, en don' you fergit dat off yo' min', needer. Hit's 'bleeged ter be dat-a-way. 'Twan't none er we-all's choosin'. We's boun' ter mek de bes' er hit. De moon may shine, but a lightered knot is moughty handy ter hab roun', en Gord knows, hit's better ter be sump'n dan nuttin'. En hit's all jes' lak I tell you, Honey, en dat is dis—Ef hit hadn' been fer de w'ite folks dar wouldn' be *no niggers*, dat is, dar wouldn' be none ter year tell er, fer dat firs' nigger In-'iz-Image would er been flung 'In de Miz.'"





*"In the Dismal Swamp."*



MARSE TOM'S KUNNOO  
SPERITS

“’SCRIBE de lake er de Dismal Swamp? W’y, Boss, you kyan’ see hit ter ’scribe hit ’twel you gits jamby ’pon top er hit, en den you’s so s’prized en ’stonished dat mos’ all yo’ bref’s tuck outn you en strangulates yo’ words ’fo’ dey kin git a chance ter leabe yo’ mouf. Co’sse you kyan’ ’scribe hit den ef you would.

“But you ain’t got dar yit ; mo’ dan dat, you habs ter go ha’f way thoo de swamp ’fo’ you kin git dar, anyhow, en de swamp hitse’f is thutty mile long one way, dough, bein’ sorter slab-sided,

'tain't dat fur de yudder. Den ag'in you's bleeed ter grabble moughty deep fer yo' term'nashun, en fer passification er yo' pashunce de whole endurin' way fer ter git dar at all, wid de groun' a tromblin' en a tromblin' ebby step you fetches; dat is, ef you goes dat way, fer on de wes' aidge er de swamp de groun' is jes' ez hard ez a rock, dough, you year me! you got ter walk thoo water knee deep ter tetch de groun' den. En, mun! de bigges' pine trees you ebber seed grows ret dar in dat ve'y place.

“Ag'in, on de yudder aidge er de swamp de reeds grows fo'teen footses high, en gre't tall bamboo briahts filled wid long thawns tangulates de reeds in-en-out, in-en-out, lak reg'lar 'nittin' wuk, but 'long to'ds de souf side, jes'

ez fur ez you kin see, is a wavin' green sea. 'Green Sea' is de name dey gin hit, 'count er hits sho-nuff lakness ter de real sea, kaze dar ain't nar' single drap er water dar fer ter mek no sea out er. Co'se de green reeds is growin' dar, en dey stays green, too, de whole endurin' time, I don' kyar ef de snow is on de groun' er how de wedder is, en den w'en de win' is a rushin' thoo deze reeds hit do soun' sho-nuff fer all de worl' lak de ro'in' er de oshun.

“ But ef dar ain't 'nuff water dar in dat perzack spot ter jesterfy de name 'sea' dat dey all gin hit, dar is plenty, de Lawd knows, ebbywhar else in sight, let 'lone dem five big ribers, ter say nuttin' 'bout de creeks dat rises 'way an'neaf de groun', out er sight. En



all 'long de enduriu' way, en mos' anywhar in de swamp, ez ter dat, you kin fin' stuck in de trees tommy-hawkses, en hatchets, en arrer haids, fer de ole folks say dat de whole place b'longed ter de Injuns once, en dat de Injuns had hit fer dar fabrit huntin' groun' 'twel de King tuck hit 'way fum 'em widout leabe ner lisunce, en gin hit ter Marse Ginul Washin'ton, 'count er his fittin' de reberlishunmerry war fer 'im. I'll berboun' dat dem Injuns libed high w'en dey did ownt hit, too, 'sides habin' a loter sport out er hit, fer eben now dar's de mo'est deers en ole hyars en rackoonzes en byars en possums en wile tuckeys in abunnance all thoo en thoo hit.

“Atter de King gin hit ter Marse Ginul Washin'ton hit wa'n't a bressed

bit er use ter 'im, en hit wa'n't no 'count needer sep'n fer de timber, kaze Marse Ginul wa'n't no coon-hunter ner no byar-hunter; en de lan' all lay sich a way he couldn' raise no craps 'pon hit. De woods wuz dar, I 'low, but atter dey wuz cut down, how wuz he gwine ter git de lumber out. Marse Ginul Washin'ton, dough, had a heap er gumpshun, I tell you, en he studdy en studdy 'bout hit a good long time, en den he git a passle er de nayers, en lak de 'Postles in de Bible dey all fetched a compass en went 'long out wid dis compass en chain en surwayed a way. Den dey all got some mo' peoples dat libed 'roun' 'bout dar, en dey all han's er 'em j'ined in tergedder en dug a ditch. Dey dug dis ditch jes' whar de Ginul en de firs'

passle er naybers dat went out had marked hit off wid de compass, en dat ve'y ditch is bekownst ez 'Washin'-ton's Ditch' ter dis day. A long time atter dis, dey cut de Jerrycho Kunnal, w'ich wuz a heap mo' handy fer 'em all, en 'sides dat, dey meked hit tetch on ter Shingle Creek, en Shingle Creek wuz nachul water, you know, en didn' git outer order lak kunnals does, en den ag'in de creek shortent de way fer 'em all ter git out de lumber.

"Well, w'en you gits nigher on ter de middle er de swamp whar de trees is highes' en bigges', en greenes', too, 'sep'n whar de win' done bruck some er 'em off, en stuck 'em down haid-fo'-mus' in de bog, er meked 'em fall ober en ride topmus' er wunner-nudder, en den in dat case you sees de w'ite peeled



snags er de trees stan'in' up in de a'r 'long side de turer one's green tops, w'ile dar green tops is downmus'. En ebby one er de bodies er deze big trees, w'edder dey is upside down er down-side up, is entangled wid woodbinze, en yaller jeserminz flowers, en grapewines in bloom, too, kaze in dar hit's lak de spring time all de yeah roun', en de mosses en p'izen wines is twistid ebby w'ich-er-way wid de on-p'izen ones, en is all mingulatin' up tergedder wid wunner-nudder, 'twel I be dad-blame, mun! ef you could git thoo ter de Lake er de Dismal Swamp widout gwine roun' on de yudder side, ef you didn' know whar de gap wuz.

“But, Jimmery Crimerny! Big Bethel Do'!! Jerusalem Crickets!!! W'en you does git thoo, en sees w'at

you does see—sees dat onnachul pon'  
full er water ret fo'mus' you, en all  
roun' de sho' jes' ez green ez green  
kin be, de flowers all a bloomin'—  
de wile cats en pole cats a shreelin'  
en a shreechin'—de birds a singin'  
chunes—de byars a growlin'—de deers  
a splungin' in de waters—de fishes a  
jumpin' up en down—de sneks en  
reptilezes dat hangs in gre't bunches  
all 'roun' ebbywhar, a drappin' in  
de water kerblunkitty-blink, ker-  
chunk, kerchunk!—de squir'ls chat'-  
rin' lak dey wuz talkin' ter wunner-  
nudder—de yaller flies en muskeetersez  
en bees a hummin' en a buzzin'—de  
crawfishes en mud-tuckles en tar'pins  
bo'in en soggin in de mud—de spring  
lizzuds en skorpi'ns a jumpin' thoo  
de branches—de ole hyars gwine lip-

perty-clip thoo de underbresh—de squeechowls a hootin' en de bats a floppin' dar wings! En dough dey's all doin' en gwine on jes' lak I tell you, en dough dar's so many diffunt kind er famblys er 'em all libin' in dar ter-gedder, dey's all han's er 'em min'in' dar own bizness en lettin' wunner-nudder 'lone.

“De a'r in dar is sof', en ez mile ez a dram er ten-yeah ole peach-en-honey, en hit habs a sorter greenish-brownish color ter hit, 'zackly lak de 'pearunce er de water in dar habs; en w'ite lilies en all kin's er unbeknownst flowers berfumes up de ontire place. Bress grashus, you dunno w'at minit is gwine ter be de naix, w'en de 'spe-unce er de feelin' er dat place firs' comes 'pon you thoo yo' eye-balls.

“’Twuz yeahs en yeahs atter dis, en I had been gwine dar constant, too, dat I tuck Marse Tom Mo’ up ter de Lake. Does I ’member all ’bout hit? Yas, suh; dat I does, dat I does, en I put de faber er dat strange, oncommon li’l’ gemman en all dat he said en all dat he done dat day away safe in my ’memb’ unce, en hit’s dar yit, dar—jes’ ez fresh ez ef hit had all happen’ yistiddy.

“De time wuz ’long to’ds day-bre’k, en I had jes’ baled out my pirogue en wuz gwine up ter de Lake fishin’, w’ en I yeard a monst’ous cur’us kin’ er soun’ ret behime me—but I nebber tuck eben ’nuff notus er de soun’ ter look ’roun’. I didn’ hab no understan’in’ in my min’ dat ’twuz anybody dat had any bizness ’long er me, en den how in de name-er-de-Lawd wuz I gwine ter

know dey want me, fer dey didn' call me 'Unkle,' ner 'Ole man,' ner 'Boy,' ner 'Ung Toney,' lak folks in gen'ally does, but holler out en say,—'Aye, aye, a-y-e, me gude mon, aye,' lak who-sum-ebber 'twuz didn' hab a grain er senses, en ain't nebber larnt ter talk good wid de li'l' senses dat dey did hab ; so I nebber pestered myse'f 'bout 'em, en wuz pushin' out, w'en firs' t'ing I knowed a strange li'l' gemman had done sprunk ober de brambles en briahts en wuz axin' me ef I wuz de boa'smans dat he had been rekermended 'bout? I tole 'im I couldn' qualify fer sartin, dat I mought be dat boa'smans, en den agi'n I moughtn'.

"I tuck off my hat ter 'im, dough, en atter I had axt 'im 'Sarvent, Marsa', en



axt 'im how his coperosity sergashu-ates, I axt 'im atter his fambly, kaze ez soon ez I lay my eyes on 'im I seed dat he wuz a stranger in dem parts, en I didn' want ter mek no bad enfloons on 'im 'bout how my w'ite folks had brung me up; but I tuck notus, dough, dat he didn' hab nar' grain er perliteness hisse'f, ner no gumpshun, needer, 'bout de perliteness dat I had. He jes' stood en star'd at me lak he ain't nebber seed nobody berfo', en all de answer he gin me back wuz, ter tek outn his money-pus, en wiggle up a piece er gol'—none er yo' ninepunces ner fo'punces, but a sho-nuff piece er de real stuff, en show hit ter me en say: 'I'll gi' you a pun', me gude mon, ef you'll row me ter de Lake er de Dismal Swamp.'

“Co'se I didn' 'gree ter do lak he axt me at de firs' offset, ner look s'priz'd at de gol' he gin me, ner nuttin' lak dat, kaze I didn' want 'im ter t'ink I ain't been use ter gol' all my life en dat my pockets wa'n't jes' linded wid hit dat ve'y minit.

“Atter I hem-en-haw a w'ile en meked de consequences er my gwine ser'ous, I axt 'im de time er day; den I axt 'im ter gi' me a chaw er terbacker, but he say he don' chaw. Den I argufy a li'l' mo', en den I tuck de barg'in up en say, bein' ez 'twuz 'im, I reckon I'd try and put myse'f out en 'comerdate 'im, dough I meked de eminence plain ter 'im, dat I wuz pestered 'bout gwine 'skhuzhunin' w'en I'd laid out ter go fishin'; dat my bait wuz kotch en in de go'de, en I showed

'im de go'de, en dat de w'ite folks dat bergages messes er fish fum me reg'lar would be moughty diserp'inted at gwine widout 'em.

“Den I tole 'im ter hopin, en hilt out my han' ter hope 'im, but he thunk I hilt hit out fer de money, en so drapped hit in, en w'ile I wuz puttin' it away he tuck en sprunk in de pirogue by hisse'f widout any he'p, jes' ez nimble ez ef he wuz a reg'lar watermans.

“You year me, he wa'n't lak none er our folks, no how, Marse Tom wa'n't, dough I didn' know 'Marse Tom' wuz his name den. Well, suh, he no sooner sot hisse'f down in de boat 'fo' he tuck outn his pencil en paper, en firs' t'ing I knowed he had writ de water, en de trees, en de sky all down on de paper, en w'en I wuz gwine thoo de las' lock,



de water jes' a rushin' in en mekin de boat rize up 'twel 'twuz 'way up eben wid de lebel er de lake, I happen' ter look to'ds 'im ag'in en wuz dat 'stonished ter see he had done en writ me en de pirogue bofe down jes' ez plain ez he had meked de trees en de turrer t'ings, dat I li'l' mo' en upsot us bofe, den en dar. But I 'mejitly 'gun ter back water, en I say, 'Marsa, I don' mean no disrerspeck ner imperdunce, but, suh, I would lak ter ax you, ef you please, suh, whar in de name-er-Gord you could hab come fum.' He 'spon' he wuz fum Norfolk, dat-day-mawn-in', but dat his home whar he en his folks all libed at wuz mo' dan a thousan' miles 'way fum dat place.

"I dunnó ef Marse Tom p'intedly knowed w'at he wuz talkin' 'bout, fer

he wuz moughty figgitty en cur'ous. I reckon he mus' er had de rickits w'en he wuz a chile, en ef he did, dat 'counts fer his bein' stunted in his grofe, en actin' so budgyfied now w'en he wuz growed up.

“ Den he 'gun queschefyin' me, en he axt ef I had ebber seed any sperits. I tole 'im I ain't sho 'bout dat, but dat I didn' lak ter let my jaw run loose 'bout ghos'es en sperits in dat lone-some place, kaze folks said de whole swamp wuz jes' 'libe wid 'em, en ef dat wuz true, dey mought be lis'nin'. Den he retch behime 'im en tuck outn a bottle meked all out er silber en slipt a li'l' narer-shaped silber pail offn de bottom part er dis bottle en den he on-screw out a silber stopper, en po' out sump'n in de pail, jes' ez w'ite ez spring

water, dat he calt '*Arish*,' en gin hit ter me ter drink—En spam ! spam !! I kin 'member de tas'e er dat '*Arish*,' ez he calt hit, yit, en how hit driv de skeer en de spooken-kramps outn me, 'twel I wa'n't 'feer'd er nuttin' on de top er Gord's green ye'th ; en I up en tole 'im 'bout all de ghos'es dat I had ebber year'd tell on.

I tole 'im firs' 'bout de bufeul lady all dressed in laylack fum top ter bottom, swingin' her haid en tossin' her frock, en comin' out at de se'f-same hour ebby day de Lawd sen's, hol'in' a fishin' pole in her li'l' w'ite han', wid rings shinin' on ebby one er her fingers, en how she'd bait her hook en fish en fish 'twel she cotch a nice big mess, den she'd win' up her line same ez a real pusson would, en espear jes' ez

sudden ez she had espeart—she, en de mess er fish, en fishin' line en all.

“ Den I tole 'im 'bout dat po' young mudder holdin' a li'l' new-bawn baby in her arms, wid her face ez pale en w'ite ez de moon—her hyar flyin', her wile eyes mos' poppin' outn her haid—ridin' byar-back on a yaller critter en lookin' back'ards lak old Satan wuz behime her, skeerder en skeerder en ridin' swiffer en swiffer, en gittin' nigher en nigher ter you, 'twel presny you years de mos' unye'thly screech en de swif'ness er de a'r jamby mos' cuts de blood outn yo' face ez she rides 'long pas' you, en w'en you opens yo' eyes quick, you don' see nuttin', —she done espeart—done gone—new-bawn baby, yaller critter en all. She wuz de ghos' er dat po' lady dat tried

ter git away fum Marse Nat Turner en Jem, dat time he had dat war up dar in Soufhampton County.

“I went on den, en I tole Marse Tom 'bout de storm ghos', er de 'ketcher ghos', ez some folks calls hit. Den I tole 'im dat w'en de thunder wuz in de a'r en de litenin' wuz in de cloud, en Marse Gabul wuz settin' up behime 'em, ef you looked en wa'n't too skeered outn yo' senses ter put 'pendunce in yo' eyes, you'd sholy see dis ghos' ridin' on a fas' long-tail mule ghos', wid a whole pack er blood-houn' ghos'es a sniffin' en a sniffin' lak dey had foun' de trail er de los' ghos' dey wuz scentin' fer.


“I yearn de tale dat dis young gemmun ghos' w'en he wuz libin' yer, 'fo' he wuz a ghos', wuz haid ober heels in



lub wid a moughty nice young lady in de nayberhood,—dough dey said her ma wuz a redempshuner, but her folks had sont de money ter perdeem her fum de cap'in 'fo' de time er her slabehood wuz out.

“Well, de night come dat dey'd 'p'inted fer ter git mar'ed in. De folks wuz all 'sembled in de parlors. De preacher wuz stan'in' up in de flo' wid de praher-book in his han's, en stan'in' 'long side er 'im wuz de mas en pas en all de yudder kinlashuns en naybers fum bofe sides er de famblys. All er 'em wuz lis'nin' en watchin' fer de bride en groom ter come in.

“De vi'tu'ls wuz all cooked. De table wuz sot en fixed up skrumpshus, en 'sides dat hit wuz nacherly loaded down wid roasen pigs, en tuckeys




whole, en tuckeys boned, en chicken saluds, en oyschers, en pickles, en zerbes, en nuts, en candies, en cakes. De cullud folks wuz dressed up in dar bes' Sunday-go-ter-meetin's, en wuz all stan'in' in de passige, jes' whar dey could see dar young missis w'en she come down styars, you know. De fiddlers had dar fiddles res'in un'neaf dar chius wid dar han's on de bows jes' raidy ter start off en strike up de 'jitimit weddin' music, 'Come, my lub, come.'

"Well, ez bad luck would hab hit, jes' ez de hall clock wuz strekin' de 'p'inted hour, de groom bounced up de styars, two steps at a time, to fetch his bufeul bride down, en dem dat seed her said she suttinly wuz bufeul, too,— dat she look ez lubly ez a angel stret

from heaben, stan'in' dar by her brack mammy, waitin' fer her groom—all dressed up in her purty w'ite frock jes' ez fine ez a cobweb, dat her ole brack mammy say she had spunt en weaved herse'f outn de flax dat growed on her pa's farm.

“Well, 'co'se de bride, you know, wuz sorter shameface' en bashful, lak gals is, en w'en she seed de groom counin' up atter her, she smile en hong her haid down, en dough she tuck his arm, she wuz moughty skittish 'bout hit, en she mus' er hilt off too fur on de yudder side. Po' gal—po' t'ing! Her modesty sholy wuz ag'in her, fer w'en she hilt off lak dat her frock, bein' flarery, kotch onter de blaze ez she passed 'long so close ter de big log fiah.



“ De skeer er de blaze kinder frusterd en addled de po' gal's jedgmen', en 'fo' de groom tuck in w'at his bufe-ful bride wuz up ter (I s'pose he wuz kinder squeegein' her li'l' han' lak grooms will, en jes' thunk mebbe she wuz projeckin'), she had let go his arm en wuz runnin' lak litenin' down de steps en thoo de do', de win' a kindle-lightin' de flames ez she flew 'twel she look'd lak a ball er fiah, en 'fo' he er any er 'em could kotch her she wuz bu'nt up alibe.

“ De po' young gemman greebed so dat he went plum' 'strackted in his min', en bein' frusterd twix' de run-away niggers gwine ter de Dismal Swamp, w'ich wuz a ebby-day 'currence wid 'em w'en dey wuz tired er wuk, en his bride runnin' 'way fum

'im dat night she kotch a-fiah, he went ter de Dismal Swamp ter look fer *her*, too.

“Po’ bridegroom! En dar in dat swamp he wandered 'bout thoo de branches en de briahts en de bogs, skeerin' up de pole cats en wile varments en sleepin' on de cole ye'th wid de wolfzez en de copperhairs en de rattle sneks, 'twel one day de cap'in er de paterrollers come 'long en foun' 'im layin' dar stone daid; but his sperit is dar yit, and hit kin be seen w'enebber dar's a big storm in de day time, he en all de houn' ghos'es, too, whar he ownt 'fo' he wuz a ghos'. Ebby wet night at midnight you kin see 'em, all ez natchul ez ef dey wuz real pussons, lak I tole you.

“But I ain't nebber yearn w'at come

er dat weddin' supper, en all dem good t'ings; w'edder de comp'ny eat hit up er not, er w'edder hit stay'd dar en wuz sp'iled, er w'edder dey gin hit ter de po', I ain't nebber yearn. Dough I yeard a heap—yeard all dat preacher talk 'bout eschangin' a weddin' fer a fune'al; yeard how dat de whole county wuz' monst'ous upsot 'bout de po' gal, en 'bout de weddin' bein' bruck up in dat turrerble way—en all lak dat, but I ain't *neber*, NEBER yeard a bref 'bout dat good supper!

“I ain't mo' en winded up dis las' ghos' tale 'fo' we wuz on de Lake, en Marse Tom jes' a writin' en a lookin' lak he wuz wounded up. Well, mun! you orter seed Marse Tom w'en I lay de paddle down en cl'ar my th'oat en he riz up his haid en de sight er de

Lake firs' bu'sted 'pon 'im. De way he stotch dem eyes er his'n, en de way his bref come en go, wuz a cor-shun. I knowed he wuz gwine ter be s'prized, but he say de Lawd ain't mek room 'nuff insides er his l'i'l body (en he say his insides wuz bigger dan his outsides at dat, dough I ain't got no understan'in' how dat kin be) ter hol' de 'mount er 'stonishments sich mighty grangerment meked.

“Marse Tom say he had been ebby-whar, but dat dat Lake er de Dismal Swamp at de een' er dat mighty fores' wuz de mos' wondersomest sight he ebber sot his two eyes 'pon. He tuck his pencil out en writ de faber er hit all down 'pon a fresh piece er paper, writ hit jes' lak.'twuz, fer all de worl', en den he tuck en writ de

talkin' part all down. I ain't nebber seed no pencil fly ober de paper lak Marse Tom's done.

“W'en we tu'nt de skiff 'roun' en went 'long back Marse Tom wuz speechless, 'twel we got 'way on de yudder side er de Feeder, w'en we come in de soun' er Br'er Alexander's woice singin' dat gorspel chune all 'bout de 'Injuns bringin' de tigers down,'\* en dat one w'at said :

“'John saw, John saw de holy numbah,  
Settin' on de golden altah-ah !’

“Den Marse Tom riz up lak he wuz dafted in de haid en axt me ter drap dat paddle fer Gord's sek, en let 'im year dat heabenly soun'. I tole 'im dat wa'n't no heabenly soun'; dat dat wa'n't nobody but Br'er Alexander, de

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\* Angels brought the tidings down.



ole bee-hunter preacher, comin' 'long singin'. Ez soon ez Br'er Alexander hobed in sight we bofe brung our boats up 'long sides er wunner-nudder. Den he en Marse Tom 'gun a confab ter-gedder. Br'er Alexander had his haid han'kercher tied up brim full er bees dat he'd jes' swarmed. Marse Tom axt all 'bout 'em, en he tole Marse Tom a heap. He tole 'im all 'bout de profi-gacy\* er de bee-huntin' bizness, en eben done gin 'im some er de diffunt kin's er honey ter tas'e. Marse Tom wuz 'ston-ished dat dar wuz ez many diffunt kin's en diffunt colors er honey ez dar wuz.

“W'en he wuz thoo tas'in' hit he axt 'im 'bout dat chune he wuz singin', en 'bout his 'ligion. Br'er Alexander tole 'im 'bout de chune, en tole 'im

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\* Profitableness.

dat he b'longed ter de silk-stockin' Chutch en wuz a praher-book 'Piskerpaleyun thoo en thoo, jes' lak his ole Marsa wuz 'fo' 'im—ole Marse Parson Keeling. Den he tole Marse Tom he s'poze, dough, c'ose *he* wuz a Roman Caferlick. But Marse Tom didn' say w'edder he wuz er w'edder he wa'n't. He jes' laft fit ter kill hisse'f en tu'nt de talk by axin' Br'er Alexander ef he wa'n't skeerd sometimes w'en he came thoo de swamps uver nights. Br'er Alexander 'low w'at in de name er Gord wuz he gwine ter be skeered fer; dat his 'ligeon was mo' perteckshun ter 'im fum de daid en fum de libin', fum de wile en de tame, fum cunjur er fum p'izen, dan de whole er Col. Willis Riddick's merlishy wuz; den ag'in, he said ef he wuz shot at, his

jacket wuz linded wid tuckey fedders so hit could tu'n aside de li'l' bird shots, w'ich wuz de onlies' kind er shot, he 'splained, dat de ketchers er anybody ebber shoots at de runaways wid, fer co'se dey don' want ter 'stroy w'ite folks' prop'ty, en ef dey wuz ter shoot 'em wid sho-nuff shot dey mought kill 'em, en 'stroy 'em, w'en all dey wants wuz jes' ter pepper 'em up some en mek 'em smart so dey could kotch 'em en git de 'wards.

Den he tole Marse Tom dat dem papers he seed 'im tekin' off de trees w'en we hoved in sight er wunner-nudder wuz 'wards. De 'wards whar de owners had had stuck up. Den he hand a passle er de 'ward papers ter Marse Tom ter read. De readin' all soun' mos' alak, 'sep'n some said dey'd

gib ten dollars, en some mo' ter de ketchers. Co'se de 'skripshuns er de runaways didn' soun' 'zackly alak, kaze some er 'em had 'formities, en some wuz short, en some wuz tall, en mos' all er 'em wuz diffunt colors fum wunner-nudder.

“Br'er Alexander say he tuck de 'wards down hisse'f kaze he want ter use 'swagin' wid de po' runaways firs', en dat de runaways want 'feared er 'im, fer dey all knowed dat de whippin' pos' ner jail, ner nuttin' couldn' mek him tell on 'em, en dat he allers gin 'em sump'n t' eat, en gin 'em matches, en 'wided his backer wid 'em, en w'at-somebber else he mought hab, en dat de marsers en de runaways bofe trus' 'im, too, dough dey couldn' mek 'im tetch none er de 'wards money' dat dey

offert. Den Marse Tom axt 'im ter sing some mo' er dem chunes fer 'im.

“Atter Br'er Alexander had sung 'Happy Kaneyun' en 'Keep er inchin' en er gittin' 'twel you inch on turer sho', en 'Chillun, drap yo' nets en foller me,' Marse Tom loosent up his coller en say he's gwine sing some fer him now hisse'f, en w'en Marse Tom open his mouf en did sing, 'twuz lak de birds a singin' at sunrise in de mawnin' in de spring time er de yeah, en de squir'ls crackin' dar nuts en de shells a drappin' thoo de leabes er de trees; lak de sof' a'r blowin' thoo de pines, lak de ripplin' er de silber fishes ez dey cracks open de golden sunshine er de blue wabes, en de coo-in' er de firs'-bawn baby ter its young mudder, all put tergedder. Br'er Alex-

ander lis'en wid his mouf wide open, his eyes shot tight en his haid flung back. W'en Marse Tom wuz thoo, Br'er Alexander nebber spuck a word, not a single word, nebber said thanky ner nuttin'. He jes' wipe offn his bal' haid wid his red han'kercher, tie up de gol' piece Marse Tom gin 'im in one cornder er de same han'kercher en put hit back in his hat, en put his hat on ag'in en swish his haid back en fofe, slow, en soush his bref up en down lak dis, den he riz his woice up ter heaben en gulp out, 'Gord-er-moughty, Gord-er-moughty!' Den he tu'n his punt about en paddle off wid his bees, en nebber eben look 'roun'.

"I had a monst'ous 'ligious, solum-cholly feelin' in my breas' myse'f, en

'twuz all I could do ter git my bref ez I steert my ole pirogue 'long back pas' de bamboo en de bunyan en de rattan, de juniper en de cypress all tanglematted tergedder, wid berfumery en grapewines wropped 'roun' en' roun', de bees a swarmin' fum de gums ter de blossoms en circlin' 'roun' en suckin' de bref outn de buds en de flowers, de rackoonzes swingin' fum de branches, de wile hogs a gruntin', en de byars en wolfzez en de turer wile varments a howlin' en a growlin' en a barkin', en de rattle sneks springin' dar rattles. All dis w'ile I wuz t'inkin' 'bout Gordermoughty, en de clouds, en de angels, en de harps wid a thousan' strings; rowin' my swiffes', 'pear lak I wuz mekin' fer de promis' land, en I wuz

so short brefed en peacerble dat w'en  
Marse Tom spuck up hit startleize me,  
en meked me come back ter ye'th ag'in.  
Marse Tom say :

“ ‘Lay down yo' oaz, me gude mon,  
en let yo' pirogue, ez you calls yo'  
kunnoo, g'long wid de scudder a w'ile,  
fer *I's* gwine ter tell *you* a ghos'  
story now *myse'f*.' ”

“ Den I say :

“ ‘Marsa, Marsa, don' you reckon  
how den you better gi' me some mo'  
er dat “Arish ” 'fo' you bergins hit ?' ”

“ En he laft, en gin me some, a sing-  
in' a chune w'ile he wuz a po'in'  
hit out, w'at said dat ‘We'll tek a ret  
good *swill*, widout water, fer old Aun'  
Siny.’\* Jes' ez I wuz gwine ter drink

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\* “ We'll tak a right gude Willie-waught  
For Auld Lang Syne.”



dis las' dram er Arish down I say, 'Marser, I ain't 'quainted wid yo' ole Aun' Siny, but dis Arish is so good I could tek a drink fer all yo' kinlshuns, young en ole, aunts en uncles en all'; but his ole Aun' Siny wuz de onlies' one er his fambly dat Marse Tom menshuned.

"Atter I had dreened de las' drap er dis Arish down my th'oat, Marse Tom tuckn read me offn de paper de same readin' he had writ down on hit dat ve'y mawnin'. 'Twuz all 'bout a young lady gittin' out er her grabe in her w'ite s'roud, 'count er her folks mekin' de grabe cole en damp, en 'bout her gwine rowin' roun' nights wid a fiah-flyin' lamp, en paddlin' a w'ite kunnoo. Well, suh, ef Marse Tom had a tole me 'bout dat ghos'-

tale 'fo' he got inter my pirogue, he'd a had ter a got 'im a nudder nigger ter kyar 'im ter de Lake er de Dismal Swamp. I wouldn' er tuck 'im fer a whole bar'l er Arish, dough co'se I don' bleebe de ha'f er dat ghos'-tale, kaze fer one t'ing, gals is moughty skeery, en dey's *feared* ter go out nights, en anudder t'ing, gals don' know nuttin' 'tall 'bout paddlin' no kunnoos—dey'ud a tu'nt de boats ober sho'; en ag'in, we all knows dat ef ebbybody got outn dar grabes kaze dey wa'n't warm en dry, de grabes would all moughty soon be empty, en skilitons en ghos'es en sperits would tek up all er we-all's room. Den ag'in I don' lak ter 'spute Marse Tom's word, kaze he's a gemman, but he don' come fum our part erde worl' en he

don' know our young missuses en how 'ticular dey wuz brung up, en I does, en I knows dat all our young missuses' ghos'es is got too much especk fer demse'fs ter be gwine out nights wid a young gemman ghos' widoutn dar ma's ghos', er some yudder lady ghos' wuz 'long wid 'em. I hates to argufy wid Marse Tom, kaze I laks him moughtly en he suttinly wuz a gemman ter me, but I bleezed ter say dat I bleebe Marse Tom meked all dat tale up 'bout hidin' de maid in a cypress tree en all 'boutn dat w'ite kunnoo en dat fiah-flyin' lamp, kaze ez much ez I been on dat Lake er de Dismal Swamp, I'd been boun' ter yeard ef dar had been any sperits dar a paddlin' 'roun' nights in a w'ite kunnoo wid a fiah-flyin' lamp."

“ They made her a grave too cold and damp  
For a soul so warm and true ;  
And she 's gone to the Lake of the Dismal  
Swamp,  
Where all night long by a fire-fly lamp  
She paddles her white canoe.

‘ And her fire-fly lamp I soon shall see,  
And her paddle I soon shall hear ;  
Long and loving our lives shall be,  
And I'll hide the maid in a cypress tree  
When the footsteps of death draw near.

“ Away to the Dismal Swamp he speeds—  
His path was rugged and sore,  
Through tangled juniper, beds of reeds,  
Through many a fen where the serpent feeds  
And man never trod before.

“ And when on the earth he sunk to sleep,  
If slumber his eyelids knew,  
He lay where the deadly vine doth weep  
Its venomous tear and nightly steep  
The flesh with blistering dew.

82 MARSE TOM'S KUNNOO SPERITS

“ And near him the she-wolf stirred the brake,  
And the copper-snake breathed in his ear,  
Till he starting cried, from his dream awake,  
‘ Oh, when shall I see the dusky Lake,  
And the white canoe of my dear !’

“ He saw the Lake, and a meteor bright  
Quick over the surface play'd—  
‘ Welcome,’ he said, ‘ my dear one's light,’  
And the dim shore echoed for many a night  
The name of the death-cold maid.

“ Till he hollowed a boat of the birchen bark,  
Which carried him off from the shore ;  
Far, far he follow'd the meteor spark —  
The wind was high and the clouds were dark,  
And the boat return'd no more.

“ But oft from the Indian hunter's camp  
This lover and maid so true  
Are seen at the hour of midnight damp  
To cross the Lake by a fire-fly lamp,  
And paddle their white canoe.”

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*"I crope ter de do', en knock soff."*



## DE MARIKLE ER TWINZES

“ ‘W’AT’S de matter wid mammy’s chile? Dar, dar, honey, who’s been boderin’ en pesterin’ you? Come’long, come ’long yer en git up in yo’ ole mammy’s lap en let her rock you en sing ter you—dat’s a good li’l’ gyerl. Dar, dar, dar—mammy lubs her baby, ’deed she do. Yas, en she’s her mammy’s li’l’ Miss Marg’it, too, en her mammy is gwine ter baby-buntin’ her ter sleep-eye-town now, en den demorrer mawnin’ w’en mammy’s baby weks up mammy gwine ter wash her face en cyurl her hyar en put on her new striked frock en kyar her in ter see her



ma. En she'll see sump'n, too, 'sides her ma,—yas, two sump'ns. Dem two sump'ns suttin'ly is gwine s'prize mammy's baby, too, bress her bones! Nemmine, Miss Marg'it, nemmine,—yo' li'l' nose ain't nebber gwine ter be outer j'int wid yo' brack mammy, dat hit ain't, honey. Dar, dar, go sleep, now.'

“Po' li'l' Miss Marg'it klum up in my lap jes' lak I tole her, en 'fo' she knowed hit her li'l' eyes had stop quiberin' en shet up tight, den she stop sobbin' en 'fo' I wuz eben thoo singin' her fabrit chune 'bout de diffunt kin's er tails de diffunt animals hab,—de squir'l wid his bushy tail, en de possum tail gwine byar; de rackoon tail wid rings all 'roun', en de stumpy-tail ole hyar,—de chile had done en

forgot all her worryments en had gone fas' asleep en wuz dreamin' dat she wuz playin' wid de butterflies en daisies in Marse Jesus' back yard wid His yudder li'l' brack en w'ite angels —bress her li'l' bones.

“De po' li'l' t'ing hain't nebbber been 'way fum her ma ez long ez dis 'fo' now. Nebber sence she wuz bawn, en she's gwine on mos' fo' yeahs ole dis comin' co'n-shuckin'.

“She'd allers been de pet er de on-tire plantashun, en wuz de onlyes' chile dat her ma en pa had up ter day 'fo' yistiddy, w'ich wuz Chuzedy, w'en ole Doctor Finney rid up in his gig en Marsar had de doctor's hoss, dat ole w'ite-face soral er his'n, onhitched en put up. Den li'l' w'ile atter de doctor driv up, Aun' Drusindy she

driv up in de ole steer kyart wid her kyarpit bag, basket en bunnels en got out en went 'long in de house wid a mighty emportant, mouster'ous, be-knowin'some a'r, en hit twan't a gre't w'ile den 'fo' we-all tuck notus dat de parsley baid wuz all grubbled up. I 'clar' dat's a fac' 'boutn dat parsley baid.

“Den 'way 'long to'ds night dar wuz a whang, w-h-a-n-g, come a squeechn en a squeal'n thoo de chamber do', en den in a minit mo' dar wuz anudder squeal en anudder w-h-a-n-g, w-h-a-n-g, en pres'n'y Marser come a runnin' out mighty acksitable, en jes' fit ter bu'st out cryin' fer joy his own se'f.

“Soon ez ebber de do' open en I kotch sight er de Marser, I sprunk up

en run to'ds 'im wid my heart mos' out er win', en I axt 'im, 'W'at is hit, Mars'er? W'at is hit? Gal er boy? En who does hit faber?'

"Mars'er flung back his haid en laff lak he'd split his sides open en gin me de answer back kinder proud en consequenshel, en say:

"'Hit's bofe, Kalline; bofe. Boy en gal, bofe. Yas, Kalline, we's got de fines' pyar er twinzes you ebber sot yo' two eyes 'pon in de room dar, fer you ter nuss.'

"Den he stop ret short off en sez, sezsee:

"'But, min', Kalline, min', 'sezsee, 'don' you on no 'count say nuttin' 'tall 'boutn de twinzes ter yo' li'l' Miss Marg'it; kaze me en her ma wants ter show 'em ter de chile firs' we own-

se'fs, en see how de enfloons er de sight  
er a pyar li'l' babies will strek her li'l'  
in'sence min'.'

“Co'se ebbybody knows dat wuz a  
unconshubul hard reman'ment fer de  
Marser ter mek. I 'clar ter grashus  
hit wuz wusser dan de toofache, er a  
miz'ry in de haid, ter be a nussin' a  
queschifyin' chile lak Miss Marg'it,  
en be wid her day in en day out con-  
stant, en keep yo' mouf shet en not  
tell her nuttin' 'tall 'bout sich a  
'portant piece er news ez a pyar er  
twinzes. She allers wuz a enquirashun  
chile, but now she wuz worri-  
fyin' herse'f en cryin' en axin' ques-  
chuns, en kyar'in' on kaze she kyan'  
see her ma, en spishenin' en speckin',  
young ez she wuz, too, dat sump'n  
outn de common wuz up. En you

know de po' li'l' t'ing tuck hit inter her haid dat w'atsumebber 'twuz had sump'n er nudder ter do wid her nose. She would set en feel her li'l' nose en want ter look at hit in de lookin'-glass en poke her li'l' fingers in her nostrums en ax ebbybody did dey know w'edder hit come fum outn de fer-truly-Giant dat Marse Jack kilt, en ef hit did, whar wuz de eyes en mouf en de ballunce part er de po' chile de Giant had eat up, en wuz hit de same Giant dat Marse Jack cut de bean-stalk down fum under? En w'at kinlashun wuz she, wid her nose out er Giant, ter de res' er dat chile de Giant eat?

“En, you year me, li'l' Miss Marg'it suttinly wuz de thoughtsomes', sprightlies' chile fer a gyerl chile you ebber seed, en she could ax de mos'

tarryfyin'es', oudashusomes' queschuns you ebber year'd. You see, all de folks on de place, en de naybers, had all pityfied de li'l' t'ing so, tellin' her jes' ez soon ez dey seed her, atter dey knowed 'bout de two twinzes, dat her 'nose wuz out er j'int.' Dat sayin', you know, 'bout yo' 'nose bein' out er j'int,' wuz one er de ole time sayin's dat de ole folks has w'enebber a new-bawn baby wuz bawn inter de fambly ter tek de place er de las' baby.

"Po' li'l' Miss Marg'it knowed sump'n wuz wrong wid sump'n, en she faulted hit all 'pon her nose, 'count er dat sayin' dey all kep' a sayin' ter her,—'nose wuz out er j'int,'—dat she wan't ole nuff ter hab de ret un'erstan'in' 'bout.

"Naix' mawnin' I wuz ez good ez

my wud. I put on her bran' spankin' new striked frock, en her low-naiked check-muzzle ap'un, en put her gre't gran'ma's Sunday year-bobs in her years; en w'en she wuz all raidy I crope ter de do' on my tipen-toes lak I wuz treadin' on kurkle-burs en knock sof' en tole de nuss, 'Yer we wuz.' Den de nuss she brung us bofe 'long in de room jes' ez a'rish en proud ez a nigger wid a cooked 'possum.

"My grashus me! Seks alibe! But Missis sutt'inly did look sweet en purty wid her brack cyurly haid a layin' back 'g'inst de bran', spang, clean 'broidered ruffle pillow-cases wid de lace rufflesez all fluchted. De baid wuz kibered ober wid a w'ite marsains counterp'in, en Missis' han's en face wuz mos' w'ite ez de baid-close.



“Two er th’ee big sprenches er labender wuz bu’nin’ away on de h’arf en berfumed up de whole room. A li’l’ bokay er crocuses w’ich I seed Marsen squattin’ down pickin off dat mawnin’ hisse’f sot in de wase on de table ’long side de baid.

“Missis looked up en retched outn her han’ en smile a li’l’ weakly smile at me en li’l’ Miss Marg’it. Jes’ den Marsen, who wuz fixin’ de winder blinzes, come for’ards en tuck li’l’ Miss Marg’it outn my arms en lay her down real slow en keerful ’long side her ma. He tole her not ter budge ner mobe her li’l’ footses, ner not ter squ’m, needer, kaze her ma wuz moughty sick, but dat she mus’ lay jes’ ez still ez a li’l’ mouse, w’ich de chile did.

“Atter de li’l’ t’ing lay dar a w’ile,

her ma a talkin' ter her en kissin' her en smobin' her hyar en pettin' her, wid her pa en de nuss bofe stan'in' close by, watchin' uneasy lak, her pa sez ter her, sezsee :

“ ‘Come 'long now, dear, you mus'n' tire yo' po' mamma. Come, papa got sump'n ter show you; dar, li'l' gyerl, dat'll do now. Come, now; come wid papa.’

“ She retched out her li'l' arms ez docilmus ez a li'l' lamb, en her papa tuck her up en toted her ober ter de yudder side er de room whar anudder baid wuz settin' up 'g'inst de wall. Marser hilt li'l' Marg'it in his ret arm en tu'nt de kivers down at de haid-boa'd wid his lef' han' en den look up at her en say :

“ ‘Yer, my li'l' Marg'it,’ sezsee,

'yer's a li'l' brudder fer you dat de good Lawd done sont down fum heaben ter you.'

"En dar a layin' en a squ'min', all swabbed up in flannens, wid his eyes shet tight, his haid a wabblin', a tryin' ter git bofe fistses in his mouf at one time, en a wigglin' away lak a wum in de ashes, wuz dat firs' twinz — de brudder.

"Li'l' Miss Marg'it look down in 'mirashun en wondermen' at dis li'l' brudder twinz's pink face en fuzzy haid. 'Twuz de firs' sho-nuff real baby she'd ebber seed ; but, my! she didn' know w'at ter mek er de wabblin' en de wigglin' part. Dat kinder skarified her, fer her doll babies nebber wabbed ner nebber wriggled. She look, en look. She didn' mek no



'moustrance ter tetch de brudder twinz, dough, en mo' dan dat, w'en her pa hilt her down en say, 'Come, li'l' gyerl, come en kiss yo' dear li'l' brudder dat de good Lawd done en sont you en tell 'im good-bye, en le's kiver 'im up nice en warm ag'in, 'fo' he ketches col', she jamby tu'nt herse'f cranksided tryin' ter keep fum tetchin' 'im, en a hollerin' out jes' ez loud ez she kin holler: 'Me no want ter kiss li'l' brudders! Li'l' brudders is puppy-babies! No, no; me s'ant kiss 'im, me no want ter, papa! No, no, no!' En, po' li'l' t'ing, she hug her pa so tight 'roun' de naik in her skarification er dat wigglin' li'l' kinlashun de Lawd had sont her dat she mos' choke de bref outn her po' papa, but at de same time, dough, she

wuz so skeered she begged en 'swaded 'im, please, suh, not ter kiber her li'l' brudder up ef he wuz a puppy baby-brudder.

"But Marser nebber tuck no notus er li'l' Miss Marg'it's beggin' en per-testinin' en fröttin'. He jes' 'lib'retly kibered de baby ober, en den mobed 'long ter de foots er de baid en tu'nt de kibers down dar, too, en said :

" 'See yer, my li'l' Marg'it, see dis yer ! See dar, now, li'l' gyerl, see ! ! Yer's a li'l' sister papa's got fer you, too, see. 'Tooby sho', tooby sho', sezsee ; 'tooby sho'.'

"Wid dat de chile stopped cryin' so short off she mos' choked hersef dis time. She drapped her li'l' eyes down all full er wondermen', en de wet tears drapped down 'pon de li'l'

new sister—de yudder twinz. Den she look up at her pa en den look to'ds de haid er de baid whar de baid-close wuz a quiberin' en a budgin', den she look back ag'in whar de li'l' sister wuz a wigglin' en a squ'min'. Her big eyes wuz starin' wid jes' ez much s'prize-ment, 'peared lak ez ef she hadn' jes' seed de yudder li'l' brudder-twinz up at de yudder een' er de baid. Her pa en ma, en de nuss en me, wuz all han's er us a watchin' her jes' lak a cat watch a mouse, wonderin' w'at she wuz gwine ter do, en pres'n'y she say: 'Did de good Lawd sont de li'l' sister down ter me, too?' En dey all laff en tell her, 'Yas, de good Lawd sont de li'l' sister down ter her, too.' Den she clap her li'l' han's en say: 'Ain't He a nice, dear Lawd, papa?'

“ Marser en de res’ er ’em ’spected she’d mek a fuss w’en dey kibered her li’l’ sister-twinz up, but she didn’, she nebber meked no rejection ner nuttin’. All she do wuz jes’ ter look ’roun’ de room en clap her han’s en say :

“ ‘Show me anudder one, papa ; show me anudder one ; show me some mo’ nudder ones de good Lawd sont.’

“ Her pa ’splained dat dem two wuz all de Lawd sont, dat dey wuz twinzes en wuz her li’l’ brudder en sister, en dey had come down fum heaben ter play wid her, en she mus’ lub ’em en he’p tek kyar er ’em, kaze she wuz de oldes’.

“ De po’ chile didn’ hab no understan’in’ dat a pyar er twinzes couldn’ be but two, en she ’gun ter cry fer

'anudder one.' 'Show me anudder one, show me anudder one,' she say, en de mo' we all laff de harder de li'l' t'ing was ter passerfy. Her pa wuz 'feared hit would mek her ma mo' sicker, en so he tole me I better kyar her 'long out en try en 'stract her min' en 'muze her, w'ich I did. But hit sudd'inly wuz a pity, dough, dat de tears should er drapped on de gyerl-twinz. 'Pear lak gyerl chilluns is 'bleeged ter hab bad luck.

"Lan' er Goshen, dough, de ques-chuns dat chile axt me atter she seed dem two twinzes wuz a corshun!

"'W'at's twinzes, mammy?' she say, 'en how come twinzes, anyhow? En how did de good Lawd git 'em 'way down yer fum heaben widout breckin' 'em all ter pieces, en w'y


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didn' He send mo' twinzes, mammy?  
En wuz dem twinzes all he had up in  
heaben?'

"She wa'n't one er dem chillun you  
could put off widout ans'in' back,  
needer. You wuz natchully 'bleeged  
ter tell her de trufe 'boutn t'ings.

"So I tole de li'l' t'ing de tale jes'  
'zackly lak I yearn hit tole myse'f  
w'en I wuz a chile, en gin her de bes'  
un'erstan'in' I could 'bout hit all. I  
esplaint at de firs' gwine off dat  
twinzes wuz a marikle, a gre't  
marikle, en dat de creashun had been  
meked a long time, en de whole er  
dat firs' lot er peoples de Lawd had  
meked in His image had bawnd li'l'  
chillun en dey had growed up en had  
mo' li'l' chillun, en dey all wuz daid  
en bur'ed en mo' had come en gone




in dar places 'fo' dar wuz any sich a t'ing ez a pyar er twinzes in de whole worl'.

“Den I tole her de name er de firs' man dat ebber meked a pyar er twinzes, en I tole her, too, dat dis man did a heap mo' stronagin' t'ings dan jes' mekin' a simple pyar er twinzes, fer dat he wuz one er de stronges' en mos' kerragesome mens dat ebber libed.

“Dat at one time w'en he fergit in his confuzhun en lef' his razor at home, en didn' hab no shot-gun ner hoss-pistal, ner no yudder kin' er shootin' i'ons ner no bowie-knife handy, dat he retched down en tuck a ole jaw-bone w'ich wuz a layin' up in de cornder er de fence 'long side de road, dat de buzzuds had picked, en dat he

tuck dis jaw-bone up en knocked de dirt offn hit en kilt de gre'tes' passel er Jews wid hit dat you ebber yeard tell on. He kilt dem Jews, too, 'fo' dey come ter dar ret minzes en knowed w'at he wuz up ter.

“Den I tole her dat at anudder time, w'en nobody wa'n't studyin' 'bout his doin' nuttin' outn de common, dat he up en flung a pillow to'ds de chutch w'ile de preacher wuz a preachin', en kilt de ontire congregashun en knocked de whole chutch down ter de groun', steeple en all, en busted hit wide open, en dem dat wa'n't mashed up en kilt wuz strangled ter def wid de fedders dat flew outn de pillow. I tole her dis man wuz jes' ez fyar-minded ez he wuz pow'ful in strenkf, en folks fum all ober de country come fur en nigh



fer ter git 'im ter sottle dar 'sputes en foughs en quar'ls. Co'se de chile didn' un'stan' all de wharfo's er dis marikle er twinzes, but she lis'en en ax queschuns en un'stan' a heap dat I tell her, w'ich wuz dis :

“ Dat one time two big Jew oomans got ter quar'lin' en 'sputin' 'boutn a baby. One er de oomans said hit wuz her chile en de yudder one said hit wuz hern, en de mo' dey quar'led en 'sputed de mo' onreznerable dey got, en de mo' onsottled dar own minzes wuz. 'Twuz jes' 'bout dis time de news come fum Leb'non all 'bout dat gre't wise King who wuz thutteen yeahs buildin' a house fer hisse'f. Dat King, dey all said dat w'en de angel er de Lawd tole 'im he mought hab anyt'ing he wuz a min' ter ax de Lawd

fer, had jes' simply up en axt 'im fer a good jedgment, a ret un'erstan'in' en a pure heart. He didn' spuck a wud 'bout money er 'sessions. Well, suh, dat praheer pleased de Lawd mought'ly, en He gin de King not onlyes' w'at he axt fer, but gin 'im de money en 'sessions whar he didn' ax fer.

“ We'n de news come 'bout dis gre't King, de preacher en de naybers all 'vized deze two oomans ter tek de chile en go ter Leb'non en let dis gre't King 'cide whose chile de chile wuz. So dey 'lowed dey would, en dey tuk ten loafs er braid en some crackerlin's en a cruze er honey en started off ter de place whar dis gre't wise King libed at, en dey walked, en dey walked, fer de way er de trans-greshum wuz a long way ter trabbul.

“Firs’ one er de oomans toted de chile in her arms, en den de yudder one she tuck hit en she toted hit aw’ile, ontwel bimeby atter dey keep on swappin’ en a res’in’ dey come ter whar de roads forked. Den dey stopped en ’sputed a spell ’bout w’ich road ter tek, ’twel pres’n’y dey ’cided ’twix’ derese’fs dat dey’d tek de lef’-han’ road, w’ich wuz de ret one, fer dat wuz de road dat tuck em stret up ter de ve’y gate er de palace whar dis gre’t King libed.

“On bofe sides er de palace de trees er life wuz growin’, en de riber er life, dat run ret ’long pas’ de ve’y do’. Hit wuz ez clar ez a crystal, too. De palace wuz meked all outen pure gol’, insides en outsides, lak glass, en wuz stucked full er pearls en diamon’s en

sardines, en th'ee rows er windows wid po'ches, en th'ones in all de po'ches.

“De gre't King wuz in his 'presence room,' jes' lak dey yeard he would be. He wuz a settin' back, dey said, on his big w'ite th'one in de middle er a rainbow, readin' de Richmon' *Whig* en smokin' a Herbanner cigyar. His teef wuz lak a lion's, his haid en his hyars wuz lak w'ite wool, his feets wuz er brass, en he hilt de seben styars in his ret han' en de keys er def en damnation jinglet fum his side, en he wuz cloved all in vestures.

“De oomans bofe reshed in tergedder en drapped down kerflap 'pon dar knees ret fo' dis gre't King. Bofe er 'em hilt tight holt er dat one po' teensy-weensy li'l' baby dey had fotch wid 'em. Bofe er 'em wuz cryin' en

kyarin' on, en 'clarin' dat she wuz de baby's true en 'jitimate ma, en dat de yudder ooman wuz a deposter en a t'ief.

“De name er dis gre't King wuz Marse King Solomon, dough I has yeard some folks dat didn' know no better say dey b'leebed 'twuz Marse King Sampson, kaze Marse King Sampson wuz a kin' er slight-er-han' man, en Marse King Solomon wa'n't. But hit 'taint needer yer ner needer dar *who* meked dat firs' pyar er twinzes—dey wuz meked, en de Good Book gibs all de credick er mekin' dem firs' twinzes ter Marse King Solomon.

“W'en dem two oomans proscrated demse'fs' on de flo' 'fo' de King ter 'cide whose chile 'twuz, he was mighty pestered 'bout w'at ter say er



do, fer he seed 'twan't no orneray case ter noller prostikute. He axt 'em ef dey'd come peaceable, en dey said yas, dey'd come peaceable.

“Firs' he try perswazhunin'. en den argufymen's wid em bofe ; but, nor suh ! elerwashun er de senterments didn' mek no enfloons, ner reman' a single speck er 'esponse, needer, fum dem two oomans. Dey didn' want no errashuns ; dey want 'session er dat li'l' baby chile.

“De King wuz so scandleized at de testament dey bofe gin 'boutn how dey come by de baby dat he got frustrated in his own min'. De mo' he lis'ened ter em de mo' he didn' know tudder fum w'ich, en dough he paid marked detenshun ter de eminence 'fo' him, en wuz jes' ez ser'ous ez ef



he had been in de cote-room at Ile-er-Wight Cotehouse 'fo' all de jedges en constubbles en majestricks in de whole county, he couldn' tell de 'fendunt fum de culbert ter sabe his life.

"De trouble, I especk, wuz dat bofe de 'fendunt en de culbert wuz ooman-folks, en dey say Marse King Solomon was moughty fond er strange oomans. Yas, 'pear lak dat, ez gre't en ez 'nipertunt a man ez dis gre't King wuz, de ooman-folks wuz ineluctable, eben wid 'im. Hit wuz de firs' time, dough, in Marse King Solomon's whole rack-erlacshun dat he ebber was floundered.

"He run his han's thoo his long cyurly hyar en rolled up his eyes ter de heabenly th'one lak he wuz in a deep tranch, en axt his Heabenly Fader fer mo' jedgment ter mek de ret

endikement, en ter ack squar' en fyar by bofe er de oomans alak.

“W'en de answer ter his praher come, hit come lak a thunder-clap, en he called out in his surwiguses woice: ‘Boy, boy, go fetch me my sode,—quick—quick! I am de Rose er Sharon en de Lily er de Walley!’ Den he stunt up en bow especkfully ter de two oomans en axt 'em would dey please ter rise en tek a cheer en be seated. De boy, he run en fotch de sode,—quick. De oomans, dey riz en sot.

“Marse King Solomon look 'roun' fierce, den skunt de skabbud off de sode de boy had fotch, en den he sharpent de sode back'ards en for'ards 'cross his boot two th'ee times en say, ‘All flesh is not de same flesh. Dar is a

kin' er flesh er man en anudder er beastestes. En dat w'ich dou sawes' dou sawes',—not dat body w'ich shall be, but a loose man. Behole! I show you a mystery. We shall be changed.'

“En 'fo' de oomans knowed hit, Marse King Solomon had deformed de gre't mystery, en had meked a pyar er twinzes outn one po' teensy-weensy li'l' spindlin' baby, en bofe twinzes wuz a heap bigger en a heap mo' sizerbul dan de baby he had meked 'em outn. En dar wa'n't no seamses in dar bodies, needer, en all de members wuz *dar*, ter tek kyar er one-er-nudder. De ret-han' ooman cried en kyar'd on moughty bad w'ile Marse King Solomon wuz a sawin' wid his sode en wuz deformin' de marikle er twinzes; but de

lef'-han' ooman jes' hilt her bref en hain't say nuttin', jes' lak Brer Rabbit did.

“W'en Marse King Solomon wuz thoo mekin' deze twinzes he put a strawberry mark on dar lef' shoul'ers, widout w'ich ef he didn' nobody could er tole one twinz fum de yudder twinz, dey fabered so in dar lakness. Hit suttinly is s'prizin', but dar wa'n't nuttin' spindlin' 'bout dem chillun atter dey wuz meked inter twinzes, dough hit do 'pear lak ter *me* dat de one wid de bigges' strawberry mark *mus'* er been a li'l' de laklies', kaze Marse King Solomon gin dat one ter de ooman dat cried en kyar'd on so bad. Den he sez, sezsee: 'You is brack but comely, O ye daughters er Jerusalem,—go fofe en feed dy kids by de shep'erd's tent.'

“Den he riz his eyes up ter heaben  
en de smoke puffed outn his nostrums,  
en he said :

“ ‘Lawd, let dy serpents 'part in  
peace, ez soundin' brass en tinklin'  
symblins, fer all flesh is grass, en de  
lub er money is ter root ef you is able!  
Grind de faces er de po'! Rule wid a  
rod er i'on! Hole fas' dat w'ich is  
good, fer in dat day seben oomanzes  
shill tek hole er one man! Now, Al-  
furd en Emmega, be fait'ful ter det!  
W'at dou seest, write hit in a *book*, en  
sen' de book ter Af'ica!'

“De oomans was marvelled en  
'mazed, en went dar ways a 'joicin', en  
stretway tuck de two chillun, Alfurd  
en Emmega, en 'parted. En de win'  
'ceasted en dar wuz a gre't ca'm.

“En dat wuz de gre't marikle. De

gre't mystery wuz deformed en de firs' pyar er twinzes wuz meked. De oomans wuz de owners. Marse King Solomon meked 'em wid his flamin' sode outn one po' li'l' teensy-weensy baby.

“ But who kin tell w'ich wuz whose chile? Er whose chile wuz de yudder? Er how many faders dar wuz ter dem two twinzes? Er did de sho'-en-sartin mudder hab 'session er de sho'-en-sartin twinzes dat wuz retly en truly her own twinzes, en ef so, how much er hit? Could dat flamin' sode dat sawed dat one po' li'l' baby inter a pyar er twinzes be de hyary parunt? Whose chillun wuz dem twinzes, anyhow? W'ich one wuz Alfurd en w'ich one wuz Emmega?

“ Let dy sperit byar witness. Bress

de Lawd, O my soul! We's all sich sinners. Hit's bes' ter tas'e not, tech not, handle not, ef yer wants ter climb dem golden styars en git yo' 'lowence er milk en honey."



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Small dark mark or smudge at the bottom center of the page.





*"De po' dorg sol en watched 'em, but needer did he bark  
ner needer did he whine."*

## 'STORICAL JUELS

THIS graphic description of these two historical duels was given to me by an old negro whose father was an eye-witness to the one and a hearsay witness to the other.

The first of these duels was fought by the "political meteor of Congress," John Randolph, and the "Great Compromiser," Henry Clay. When the election of 1824 went to the House and was decided in favor of John Quincy Adams by the vote of

Henry Clay the thunder of Randolph's voice was not the smallest element in the storm which assailed the recalcitrant Kentuckian. To the general denunciation of "bargain and corruption" with which Clay's action was received Randolph added yet more stinging characterization, for which language he was challenged.

The magnanimity of the one and the generous sensibility of the other on the occasion of the duel excited general admiration.

The second notable duel was in a less elevated class of society, but was nevertheless characterized by honorable conduct, cool determination and unflinching courage, which would have been commendable in much higher circles. It was fought between

two very black servitors, and grew out of a sentiment which has been the occasion of many remarkable events,— Love. A sable-tinted beauty having taken possession of both hearts, it became necessary that the vital question should be decided in some definite manner, and what could be more conclusive than the primitive test to which resort was had away back in the beginning when Cupid first disturbed the peace of the human race?

“HATAN, — yas, suh, dat's my name. Dat is, hit's de las' po'tion-part w'ich I answers by w'en dey calls me, kaze my whole name, Powhatan, was'es too much er de w'ite folk'ses bref, habin' ter call hit ez of'n ez dey

does. Powhatan is one er we-all's fambly names en signerfies who *we is*, dough dar's some er deze yer 'sumpshus niggers en po' w'ite trash steals hit fum us, kaze 'taint nuttin' 'tall but stealin' fer anybody ter tek a name dat dey don' 'herit fum dar own gran'faders. Our fambly don' lak hit, needer.

“*Our* w'ite folks is quality, en co'se so is we. We don' come fum none er dat jail-bird, pizen Guinea trash. Nar, suh, dem dar ole time Dutchers didn' hab nuttin' 'tall ter do wid sellin' er we-alls incesters fer terbacker. In dem days dat I's talkin' 'bout, you know, terbacker wuz mos'ly de onlyes' kin' er money dat folks ober yer had ter sell en buy per-wizhuns en niggers en wifes en yudder


t'ings lak dat wid. Yas, suh, I wuz bawn en bred en brung up 'long er de Ran'olfses.

“De ve'y firs' meat-peddlers dat dar wuz, dough, didn' confine dey-se'fs ontirely ter cullud meat; dey use-ter sell moughty nigh ez many wi'te niggers ez dey did brack niggers in dem days. But po' w'ite trash den wuz jes' lak po' w'ite trash is now. Dey wuz uppish en no 'count on de face er de ye'th, allers 'tendin' lak dey kyan' stan' wuk. So de folks nat-chully stuck ter de kin' dat wuz wuff de mos' ter 'em radder dan ter de ones dat wa'n't wuff de salt dey eats in dar hoe-cakes.

“Flesh en blood wa'n't sole allers fer endurin' yo' whole life in dem days. Sometimes dey wuz sole fer a



termnashun er time, en ef one er dem dat wuz sole got onsatisfied in his min' en runned away 'fo' de termnashun er his time wuz up de owners would bran' 'im on one er his cheeks wid a red hot i'on, dat is ef dey kotch 'im. My daddy say dat Marse John Ran'olf allers said he b'leebed dat dem boat-loads er imergrates would be mos' er 'em tuck back whar dey comed fum, ef hit hadn' been fer dat pesky terbacker crap. You see, terbacker is a heap er trouble. Firs' t'ing you does you plants hit, den you wuks hit, den you wuns hit, kaze de wums would eat de 'tire crap up ef you didn'. Den you habs ter kiver hit up uver nights, den onkiver hit uver days, jes' lak 'twuz a new-bawn baby, kaze ef you didn' 'twould freeze; en



you habs ter keep on wid dat kiverin' en onkiverin' en handlin' hit en on-handlin' hit ober en ober ag'in, twel de crap is not only meked, but is put in boxes en nailt up en sont ter town.

“Deed, hit meks me laff, but hit's de trufe—de terbacker crap puts me mought'ly in min' er folks, dough I c'lar ter grashus, ef you teks hit all fum firs' ter las', hit's a sight mo' trouble ter raise a crap er terbacker dan 'tis a crap er chillun. Co'se dar wa'n't 'nuff po' w'ite folks a libin' ober yer endurin' dem days ter do all de wuk dat dat kind er crap 'quired. Dey could 'tend ter de corn, en de wheat, en fodder, en 'tater craps, en sich ez dem, but atter dat time you year tell 'bout w'en Miss Liz'bef's beau, Marse Rawley, comed ober yer

en meked dat wonderful 'skivery er terbacker ('twa'n't nuttin' but a weed w'en Marse Rawley 'skivered hit) en all han's tuck ter raisin' hit, dey wuz consequenchly 'bleeged ter hab mo' he'p dan dey had had.

“Dough I wuz brung up in de Ran'olf's fambly myse'f, we-all's wuz 'herited in hit fum de Bland side er de house. Marse John's ma wuz a Bland, en all er my kinlashuns en my daddy's kinlashuns b'longed ter her, en wuz Blands, too. Well, Marse John's ma, ez I tell you, mar'ed Marse John's pa. En, mun! She wuz a ketch ter be kotch, too, fum way back. She wuz ez rich ez cream, en let 'lone dat, she wuz de purties' young gal in de whole county, en she had a sight mo' beaux, too, 'sides Marse John's pa, en mo' 'an

dat, she could er got anybody in de whole lan'.

"I don' b'leebe, fum w'at I yearn 'bout Marse John's looks, dat he tuck his looks atter his ma, dough my daddy say, dey all said he wuz a moughty lakly, peart chile w'en he wuz ret young, but looks ain't needer yer, ner needer dar, fer 'purty is ez purty does,' en ef Marse John outgrewed his good looks he suttinly ingrowed monst'ous good sense to stedify de loss er de looks.

"My daddy say he yeard his daddy tell dat he ain't nebber come 'crost no yudder pusson dat fabers Marse John perzackly. He say Marse John's face wuz ez narer ez his han' ; dat twuz so conshumbly narer hit meked his chin, dat wuz a natchul good size chin ef hit had been lef' by hitse'f, 'pear on-

sizabul fer his face. Den ag'in, he didn' hab any sign er lips growin' on de outsides er his mouf, en habin' nuttin' but inside lips, hit meked his mouf 'sume de 'pearunce er a slit cut lenkfwise 'twix' en 'tween his nose en his chin. En dat mouf-slit er Marse John's wuz jes' stotch ez tort ober his teefs ez hit could be stotch. He wuz dark-skinded en didn' hab nar' single bit er red color in his face, lak his ma had, ner a speck er smitch er whisker roots eben growin' in de meat, much less real sho-nuff whiskers. His nose wuz short, but 'twuz ez stret ez a shingle, dough. His haid—well, suh, his haid wuz scan'lous, hit wuz so li'l'. Hit wuz de li'les' haid for a growed-up man you ebber sot yo' two eyes 'pon. 'Deed, fum w'at dey said,


'twa'n't much bigger dan my two fis'es. En he wuz dat skinny, en spindlin', dat ef he hadn' er been a moughly rich man, you'd a p'intedly b'leebed he ain't nebber had a good squar' meal er wittles in his whole life. Eu bein' so straight en tall ez he wuz, de li'l' bit er fat he did hab on his bones didn' mek no sort er enfloons.

“ His woice w'en he spuck in a low tone soun' lak a pianer, 'twuz dat tuneful en sweet. W'y, dar wa'n't a ooman 'bout de place, w'ite er brack, had nar' sof'er woice dan his'n. But, mun! w'en he spuck loud, 'twuz a can-opener, I tell you, en jes' ez squeechy, too, ez a ole brucken tin horn. He had one er de purties' meked han's you ebber seed, en you could jamby clutch bofe er yo' own han's 'roun' his wais,

'twuz dat li'l'. But dem speckled eyes er his'n, by Jimerny ! Dem eyes !

“Dar wa'n't nar' nudder pyar eyes lak Marse John Ran'olf's in de whole County er Ferginny, no, ner in de whole relation er de Nunitid States, needer. My Lawd ! I tell you de hawk's eyes dat you yeard folks read en talk 'bout bein' so bright, wuz li'l' 'signifercant fish eyes ter Marse John Ran'olf's eyes.

“All han's er de brack folks sot a heap sto' by Marse John ; no mo' sto' dan dey orter er sot, dough, kaze I tell you Marse John didn' hab no ekal in de wide worl'. Nar, suh ! W'y, does you know he tuck en 'deaverd ter l'arn ebby bressed one er we-all cullud folks, fum de li'les' ter de bigges', ter say de Lawd's Praher, en all ten er de Re-



man'men's er de Law by heart. En uver Sundays, w'en he wuz at home, he allers preached a sho-nuff sermon er de gorspil ter us hisse'f.

“ Marse John wuz ez rich mos' ez pie-crus', too. Yas, suh, dat he wuz. W'y, he had jamby fo' hundud niggers en two hundud hosses, ter say nuttin' 'tall 'boutn all de lan's en all de yuder t'ings dat he ownt in abunnance. En, mun ! eby las' one er dem fo' hundud niggers er Marse John's lubbed de ve'y groun' he trod 'pon ; dey would er gib de las' drap er dar blood fer 'im, dat dey would. I knows, kaze I wuz *one* er 'em.

“ Nar, suh ; po' Marse John nebber got mar'ed ; no, nebber, dough dey say he come moughty nigh hit oncet. Yas, suh ; de weddin' day eben wuz



sot ; but my daddy say dey all tuk notus dat de nigher de 'pinted time got, de mo' onres'less en onsatisfied Marse John got, twel one Chuzedy mawnin', I yeard 'twuz de ve'y day sot fer de mar'iage, he 'low dat he'd lak ter hab a inferdenschal talk wid de young missis dat wuz gwine ter be. She 'low she 'greed, en she comed down moughty peart en gay en met Marse John in de passige. Dey bofe bow en smile en ax atter wunner nudder, en bofe look moughty lubbin' en bofe 'quired moughty perlite how tur'er one sergashuates. Den dey went 'long soshuble-lak tergedder inter de drawin'-room. De young Missis she wuz a blushin' en lis'nin' ter Marse John kinder sideways wid her eyes half shot up, en he wuz confabin' ter her

'bout de bunch er mawnin'-glories dat he hilt in his han'.

“De las' t'ing dey all yeard Marse John say wuz jes' 'fo' he git ter de do', w'en he tu'nt 'roun' en look at her jes' lak she wuz de ve'y firs' red-meat watermillion dat ebber growed 'pon de vine, en he lay de mawnin'-glories 'long side her purty, blushin' face, en say dat she 'vide dar glory wid 'em, she wuz so royal en so gran'. But dar ain't noboddy nebber knowed w'at pas' 'twix dem two atter dey went 'long in de room en shet de do' to behinst 'em; needer w'at dey done, ner w'at dey wuz a talkin' 'bout, ner nuttin' else; dough Kalline (she wuz de maid) she say she lis'en ebby chance she git, but she say she kyan' year a wud dey said ner a t'ing dey done, dey talk so

low, widout she say she could er crope 'roun' on de yudder side, whar de dormer winder wuz, but she say ef she'd er done dat she skeered somebody would er kotch her.

“Atter a long w'ile pass by, Marse John open de do' en comed 'long out all by his lone se'f. Den he shet de do' sort er sof' en keerful—jes' lak hit 'twuz shet to by de bref er de sigh dat he breabed 'g'inst hit. Bress de grashus! but he looked ez w'ite ez ef he'd seed a ghos' w'ile he been in dar. His haid wuz bow down on his li'l' breas'bone, en his mouf wuz drawed so tight ober his teefs, en wuz so pupple, hit looked lak 'twuz mos' mortifycated. He allers walked lak a Injun any way, but he walked straighter en fas'er en mo' lak a Injun dan ebber, en went

'long out lonesome lak ter de stable en git outn his hoss all by hisse'f, en put de saddle on 'im by hisse'f, too, en rid off 'fo' anybody knowed w'at he wuz up ter,—rid off widout ans'in' any queschuns ter nobody, er eben down sayin' good-bye, ner nuttin', dough w'en Ung Jim gib Sis Viny de aigs out de troff whar his hoss wuz fed outn he foun' some money layin 'long side er de aigs, en you know de hen nebber layed no *money* in de hoss troff.

“De suff'rin' dat wuz in Marse John's min' ez he rid away wuz wukin' hitse'f out, dough, spite er all he could do, en fum dat time for'ards dat same 'spresshun he had on his face den, en dat same manner he had in his ways den, lasted twel dat las' night in dat li'l' 'ligeous town er Filerdel-

fyer, whar he went ter kotch de boat dat wuz gwine ter kyar 'im 'cross de oshun ter Lun'en ter see ef a change er a'r ober dar in Lun'en wouldn' do 'im some good; but Filerdelfyer wuz all de fur Marse John got. Dat yudder boat dat lan' on a diffunt sho' fum Lun'en,—dat sho' whar dar ain't no mar'in' ner no givin' in mar'in', wuz de boat dat po' Marse John Ran'olf tuck.

“Po' Marse John! he wuz only' jes' gwine on sixty odd w'en he wuz called home to glory. De green life wid its moss en ferns en wid all hits buds en twigs wuz bu'nt out by de fiahs er def. Yas, I knows ez well ez ef I'd been dar dat ole man Gabe tooted his horn loud en cl'ar; dat ole man Jacob let down his lather moughty pleasin' en proud, en ole man Peter meked a moughty jing-



lin' wid his keys en de angels tuned dar harps mo' keerful en clared dar th'oats ter sing mo' sweeter, en jedgment day put out anudder sign dat day dat Marse John Ran'olf die.

“Pears lak ez his bref swunk away ter a th'ead, dat his weary eyes wuz res'in on de yaller golden fiel's er waberin' wheat wid ebby haid er wheat kindlelighted by a glowfly lamp, en dat his yeahs wuz a lis'nin' ter a sof' cooin' woice fum heaben, singin' a low cradle song.

“Po' Marse John! His las' sun set in de lan' er Filerdelfyer, but I knows de hand er redempshun wuz hilt out ter 'im jes' ez keerful ober dar in Filerdelfyer ez ef he'd been in ole Ferginny. De angels dat de Lord sont fer Marse John's sperit steert de boat

ez stret fum Filerdelfyer ez ef dey'd  
put it aboa'd at de Ole Dominion  
w'arf at Richmon'. En w'en de sun  
riz de naix mawnin' on de turer sho'  
whar de ekkoes er dis yer worl' kyan'  
soun' I b'leebe dat ef you could er  
looked thoo de clouds you'd er seed  
Marse John wid his puny li'l' haid, en  
his gre't proud sperit layin' on Marse  
Aberham's sof w'ite buzzom, peacebul  
en pashunt en at res' at las', wid de  
shackels er de ye'th done loosted, de  
bells er heaben a ringin', en de angels  
en archangels en mussy en lub en de  
sisterin' all 'roun' 'im shoutin' glory  
halleluyer! Dey said Marse John's li'l'  
corpse didn' look mo' dan sixteen  
yeahs ole, en dat he talked up ter de  
las' minit; yas, talked 'twel he got  
almos' inside er de walley wid de

shadder er def, den his mouf 'gun ter wiggle, his jaw drapped suddent en Marse John wuz daid. Co'se w'at he said at de las' wuz meant fer de sperits, kaze he didn' spuck loud nuff fer nobody but sperits ter un'stan' de meanin'.

“W'en po' Marse John Ran'olf wuz libin', he didn' do so pow'ful many stronagin' t'ings ez he did perwentin' wicked en onwrong t'ings fum bein' done. I disremembers perzackly de time my daddy say dat Marse John fought dat juel wid Marse Henry Clay, but 'twuz endurin' de time Marse John Quinz Adams wuz de Pres'den' er de Nunited States er Ferginny. Marse John Quinzy, you know, wuz dat Pres'den' w'at drapped down daid up dar at de Cap'tol dat time, en dey




say dat ter dis ve'y day, ebby yeah jes' 'bout de same hour dat Marse John Quinz Adams deceasted dis life en drapped daid, his po' onres'les ghos' kin be seen prowlin' 'roun' de corde-roys, en dat *his* ghos' gibs kerrage ter all de yudder ghos'es, en dough you kyan' see de sperits er deze onconsequenshal ghos'es lak you kin Marse John Quinz Adams sperit, you kin year 'em mekin' de bigges' kin' er rus'lin', en confabin', en jabberin', en roarin' 'roun', en buzzin'—a clappin' fer pages, en de pages a runnin', en all de lak er dat de whole endurin' time dat Marse John Quinzy's ghos' is out.

“Dough Marse John Quinz Adams was jamby a hundud yeahs ole he wa'n't nuttin' lak raidy ter deceast his life en lay down ez ghos'. Some say

'twuz kaze he had a speech he want ter mek firs' 'fo' he go, en some ag'in say he wuz a gre't man fer wotin', en dat he want ter wote wid his party. W'at dey all sez, dough, don' encord wid w'at Marse John Quinz Adams say hisse'f wid his las' bref, w'ich wuz dat he 'wuz content.' But den ag'in w'en you looks fudder'mo', how is you gwine ter put any 'pendunce in dem las' wuds er his'n 'bout his bein' 'content,' w'en jes' 'bout a minit 'fo' he said dem las' two wuds he said, 'Dis am de een' er de ye'th,' en we all know dat ain't so, fer de ye'th is yer yit.

"Marse John Quinz Adams ain't got nuttin' tall in de Lawd's worl' ter do wid dis yer juel I's gwine ter tell you 'bout, en I don' know w'at meked me let my jaw run on 'bout 'im lak I


is, so I better g'long back ter hit 'fo' I lose de way fer good en all. I 'bleeged ter tell you de trufe at de start, en dat is, Marse John Ran'olf wuz ontirely ter blame fer dis juel, fer he 'gun de qua'el hisse'f wid Marse Henry Clay. You see, Marse John wuz moughty high sperited, en had too much strenkf en surwigusness in his temperashun fer his own good. I dunno w'at he en Marse Henry Clay wuz 'sputin' 'bout, but I does know dis, dat Marse John called Marse Henry out er his name, en 'sulted 'im ; 'sulted 'im, too, in de Senate-house, 'fo' mo dan a hundud peoples, I reckon. Co'se dat riz de anamus in Marse Henry's breas', en he tuck Marse John up, en reman' dissatusfacshun. Marse John say he kin hab all de dissatus-



facshun he wants, en he kin hab hit w'en en whar he choose, en ret dat minit ef he laks.

“All dar frien’s on bofe sides dat year’d ’boutn de fuss wuz in dead restress, fer ebbyboddy knowed dey wuz bofe er ’em de bes’es shots in de whole lan’. Marse John p’intedly said, dough, fum de firs’, dat he wa’n’t gwine ter mek no widderses ner orfan-ses er Marse Henry’s fambly; dat co’s e he wuz gwine ter shoot, but he ain’t say whar he wuz gwine ter p’int his gun w’en he do shoot. Dis foolishness didn’ oncord wid de noshunments er Marse John’s two seckonses, dat wuz gwine ’long wid ’im, ’cordin’ ter dar ’greement, ter he’p ’im shoot Marse Henry. Marse Ginul Hamilton he up en spuck firs’. He wuz lak

Marse John's own brudder, Marse Ginul Hamilton wuz, kaze his ma en Marse John's ma had been ez familious ez sisters ebber sence dey wuz li'l' gals tergedder, en he 'low dat ef Marse John wuz gwine ter kyar his aigs-en-trikiness ez fur ez dat, en ack ez dad-blame curisom en onreazenerubble ez he say he wuz dat he'd be-dog his cats ef he wuz gwine wid 'im one step. Marse Kun'el Tattnell j'ined in wid de same argufyments, en bofe er deze gemmens 'greed dat Marse John mus' git some yudder frien's ter see 'im shot down. All dat Marse John's seckon-ses could say, en all de eminence dat dey brung ter byar, didn' onsottle Marse John's min'. His min' wuz meked up ter shoot in de a'r, en in de a'r he wuz gwine ter shoot, but he say



he gwine ter deceibe Marse Henry's load, dough, ret in de breas', kaze he say hit don' matter ef he *do* git kilt, fer dar ain't nobody ter greebe atter 'im in dis wide worl' ; dat nobody ain't gwine drap no tears on de green sob dat kibers his po' wufless kyarkis. My daddy never say how hit come 'bout, but Marse John pas'fy all de rejecshuns er de two seckonses, en dey bofe 'greed dat dey'd g'long wid 'im howsomebber hit wuz, en let 'im hab his way.

“Well, w'en de 'p'inted time come 'long, 'peared lak dey mus' a knowed all 'bout de trouble ober yonder in de promis' lan', fer de sun wuz a settin' lak a big ball er fiah in a burnin', blazin' sky. De whole heabens wuz dat yaller dat fum w'at dey all said hit

mus' a look lak de Tredegar I'on Wuks dar in Richmun'. Marse John he got ter de place 'bout a minit a-haid er de 'p'inted time. He had on a swaller-tail coat wid a big collar, en de buttons on hit wuz jamby tetchin' wunner-nudder, dough de onlyes' button dat wuz buttoned up wuz de one at de wais'. Marse Henry, dough, *he*, mun! wuz all dressed in de topknob er de fashion, wid a fan-tail coat on, wid de buttons on hit sot way fur apart.


"Gre't Gord in Heaben! Gre't Gord in Heaben! dar dem two gre't mens stood a lookin' at wunner-nudder. W'at on de face or de ye'th does you reckon dey wuz studyin' 'bout, anyhow? Hit suttinly wuz turerble, fer de good Lawd don' mek a pyar er

mens lak dem two ebby day, en dey wuz bofe brung up in de paff dey should go, en knowed a heap better dan ter ack lak dey wuz gwine ter ack.

“ Pres’n’y Marse John’s eyes happened ter drap ’pon his trigger, en he called Marse Gin’ul Hamilton en tole ’im he didn’ lak a hyar-trigger fer nuttin’. Dat a hyar-trigger wuz liebul ter fly off, ’fo’ you knowed hit; en a nudder t’ing, he could skasely feel de totch er a hyar-trigger thoo his buckskin glubs. Wid dat Marse Kun’el Tannell ter ’bleege ’im went for’ard en hyard de trigger fer Marse John, w’en —piff-piff-pow ! ker-blim-m-m !! jes’ lak Marse John say ’twould, de gun went off wid de muzzle een’ a p’intin’ to’ds de groun’. Dat meked Marse Gin’ul Jessup t’arin’ down mad, en he




hop 'roun' skrumpshus jes' lak a tuckey  
gobbler wid a fresh tater-bug, en w'ile  
he wuz r'arin' en shuckin' his han's en  
sw'arin' 'bout w'at he wuz gwine ter  
do, lak he wuz jes' lineded thoo en  
thoo wid emportance, Marse Henry  
Clay bow his haid, en spuck up firm  
en strong. His voice soun' ez cl'ar ez  
a bell. He look ez proud ez a king,  
en he said: 'Gemmen, hit's a ax'dent;  
let de 'rangements perceed, ef you  
please.' Wid dat, dey all er 'em bow  
solumcholly. Marse Gin'ul Jessup (he  
wuz Marse Henry's haid man) shet up  
dat minit. Den de wud wuz gi'n en  
de 'rangements perceeded. Marse John  
done jes' lak he said he was gwine ter  
do. He riz up his gun swiff' en fiah  
in de a'r. Marse Henry shet up one  
eye wid 'terminashun en tuck *daid*



*aim*, but ez good luck would hab hit, fer de ve'y firs' time in his whole endurin' life, Marse Henry missed his mark.

“Marse Henry ain't no sooner seed w'at he did see, en got a cl'ar un'erstan'in' 'boutn w'at Marse John had done, dan he bu'st out cryin' en flung his gun away en say, 'My Gord, Ran'olf; my Gord, ole feller; I preh ter Heaben I ain't totcht you.' Wid dat dey bofe er 'em shuck han's en hug wunner-nudder en meked up. Some says dey kissed; but I dunno. En dat wuz de een' er dat moughty 'storikal juel. De way I tole you is de stret way, wud fer wud, jes' lak I yeard hit fum my daddy's own mouf, en he wuz *dar* — ret on de spot, en he knowed, fer he yeard hit all — en he seed hit all.

“ DE YUDDER juel I yeard my daddy tell 'bout was fought up dar in Lee County, en ebbybody gin hit up, dat dat juel wuz de outnes' juel ebber fought in dem parts er any yudder parts, ez ter dat. Hit wuz fought 'bout de same time ez Marse John's en Marse Henry's juel wuz fought, too. Sep'n de Lee County juel wuz sho-nuff *fought*. Anudder diffunce wuz dat de Lee County juel was fought twix' two big niggers. Bofe niggers, too, wuz ez brack ez de pot. One nigger b'longed ter Marse Henry Lee, who wuz de Gubner er Ferginny, en de turer nigger b'longed ter de Joneses dat libed at Joneswill. Nigger tradin' wuz de 'kazhun er *dis* juel bein' fought. En hit all come 'bout lak dis :



"De Joneses tuck en trade dar bricklayer off fer a ret bret-skin, lakly-lookin' merlatter gal, en gin two hundud dollars ter boot. De trade wuz wid a fambly libin' at Knoxwill, 'bout sixty miles fum whar dey libed.

"Well, two er de Joneswill niggers got ter broozin' 'roun', en palaverin' wid dis gal, 'twel dey got darse'fs haid ober heels in lub wid her, er got cunjered, one er de yudder. 'Deed I dunno w'ich 'twuz, cunjer er lub, bofe has de same symp'ums; any-how-somebber, w'edder 'twuz cunjer er w'edder 'twuz lub, bofe niggers 'clared 'fo' Gord, dat dey wuz gwine ter hab Marse Henry Lee's gal ef dey kin git her. Mo' dan dat, dey 'lowed dat dey ain't gwine ter ax no odds ner interwenshuns fum wunner-nudder, needer.

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“De gal she mought er had a sweet-heart in Knoxwill fer all dem two niggers knowed. Anyhow, she ain't nebber been axt ter choose 'twix' em, so co'se she hadn' gib no qualifykashuns ter needer one 'bout w'ich she laked de bes'. She wuz soshubble jes' de same wid bofe. She mought er laked one mo' dan de yudder, but ef she did she nebber signerfy w'ich one 'twuz. One wuz jes' ez insecatin' ter her ez de yudder, so fur ez anybody seed er knowed.

“T'ings went 'long lak dis 'twel maple-sugar time, w'en bofe niggers meked a termnashun in dar min's ter put a een' ter dar 'spishuns 'bout winner-nudder, en a een' ter dar worriments 'bout de gal, en ter fin' out who wuz w'ich en w'ich wuz who,

wid her. Dough bofe de mens had been speechless, en onfrien'less, wid winner-nudder ebber sense dey firs' 'skivered de turer one's detenshuns, dey had been 'bleeged ter wuk sides by sides.

“ Well, hit come 'long to'ds de een' er de sugar-bilin', en one Saddy de hawn blowed fer de han's ter lay off dar wuk 'twel Monday, lak hit in gen'ally does uver Saddy. Dem two gre't big brack nigger lubbers wuz wukin' sides by sides lak I tole you, en w'en de hawn gin de las' toot, dey stopped en ball dar eyes 'roun' at winner-nudder fer a minit, en den dey drapped dar wuk en dar eyes bofe, en went 'long down ter de creek en tuck a swim. Atter dey'd washed dar-se' fs dey went ter dar quarters en dressed

darse'fs up in dar bes' Sunday-go-ter-meetin' close. Den dey tuck de li'l' cakes er maple sugar all cut in squar's, en hearts, en diamon's, en rabbits, en mens en hoss shapes dat dey'd bofe been a sabin' up, en dey fixed 'em in de diffunt willer baskits dat dey had each meked darse'fs uver nights. Den dey kivered de baskits ober wid clean corn shucks,—wid de shucks all tasseled out at de een's. Den dey w'isserled ter dar dorgs, en hangt dar baskits on de een's er dar sticks, en hangt de sticks ober dar shoul'ers, en den dey started off down de road bofe tergedder, needer one sayin' nuttin' ter winner-nudder.

“Jerushe, dat wuz de name er de gal, wuz jes' thoo wid de week's darn-in' w'en she looked up en seed de two

mens, wid dar two dorgs a foll'in on behime 'em, comin' on thoo de road gate. De gal tuck hit all in. She seed de wukkins er dar min's, she seed how dem mens wuz raserlin' fer her wid de ole boy. 'Twa'n't proned inter de gal ter be 'sateful, but she know'd she wus 'bleege ter be so den, fer dough dem two mens wuz ez 'umble ez de naix w'en dey wa'n't tarryfied, she knowed dat w'en dar Af'kin blood wuz up dar wa'n't no subjewin' er dar rashfulness. Ez she watched 'em, she got mo' en mo' skeered 'bout de consequenchals, en she 'termint dat she ain't gwine ter mek no extinshun ter he'p on dar confracshuns, so w'en dey offud her de maple sugar she say she much 'bleeged ter 'em bofe, *'deed she wuz*, but she



kyan' 'cept hit. She say she got mo' maple sugar now dan she kin eat, en ag'in she say maple sugar allers meks her teef ake, en dat hit don' 'gree wid her *nohow*; dat ez fer her, she'd heap rudder hab 'lasses any day. Wid dat bofe de niggers tu'ned en styared at her lak dey wuz gwine ter eat her up. Den dey tu'ned en ball dar eyes at wunner-nudder, 'twel 'deed dar eyes 'peared lak two big w'ite chana sassers sot in dar huids, but dey ain't say nuttin'. Den dey lit out en tote deyse'fs off, en lef' de sugar en de gal, bofe er 'em tergedder, settin' dar on de weabin'-room do steps. Dey jes' w'isserled ter dar dorgs en went 'long outn de gate. W'en dey got ter dar quarters dey bofe retcht up en tuck dar rifleses down offn de j'ice widout sayin' nuttin' ter wunner-



nudder ag'in, en went 'long to'ds de  
Cum'lan' Mount'ins, en didn' stop  
'twel dey git jes' dis side de Kentuck'  
line.

“Dar in dem lonesome woods 'neaf  
de big, strong oaks, de bitter-hearted  
dog-woods, de low-sperited willows, de  
jack-tar ash trees, de spyin' sweet  
gumses, de sykermore tu'n-coats, de  
copybook beeches, de sunshine hick-  
orys, de grabeyard walnut, de vain-  
jedgement cherry trees, de wounded-  
scarry bloody sugar-maples. Dar  
whar de sun nebber shine 'pon de  
brack ye'th, wid de win' mekin' no  
diffunces, but howlin' en w'isserlin' en  
rus'lin' thoo de crooked en de stret, de  
low en de tall trees, jes' de same. De  
Powel Riber jamby at 'em, too, ro'in'  
en splashin' en a sputterin'. Dar dem

two big brack nigger-mens, widout no seckon's, widout no doctors, widout no nuttin', went ter 'stroy dar own souls en dar w'ite folks' prop'ty.

“Well, suh! up ter de ve'y las' de two mens didn' skasely look to'ds wunner-nudder, let 'lone speak. Dey bofe went ter wuk ez hard ez dey could en tuck en cl'ared away de underbresh. Den dey meajered offn de fifteen pas-in's, tuck dar places darse'fs, drapped a w'ite corn shuck, kaze dey didn' hab no hank'cher ter drap, en count studdy en solemn, One—Two—Th'ee! Den wid all de kurrige in de worl' dey gin out dat li'l' wud at de same time, bofe tergedder—NOW! At de soun' er dat wud bofe niggers fiahed—bofe er 'em drapped—bofe wuz shot in dar breas'es. One wuz daid. He deceasted



hit time he drapped. De yudder one dat wuz shot wuz hit in de ret breas', en he li'l' mo' en deceasted hit, too, but atter he'd steamed up a li'l' bref he stuf't his ole hat in de woun' ter stop de bleedin', en meked out ter crawl ter de roadside, whar he lay suff'in' en prehin' fer he'p 'twel de foll'in' Chuzedy 'bout sunrise in de mawnin'.

“Dat gal, Jerushe, knowed sump'n turerble wuz gwine ter happen. She sot de sugar dey lef' behime 'em away in de cubbud; one er de baskits she sot keerful up 'pon de top she'f en rol' her eyes up sideways at hit, but de turrer one she sot on de flo' en shobed hit in de cornder wid her foots widout eben lookin' to'ds hit. Den she look up at de basket on de top she'f lubbin', en breaved hard. Den she locked de


do' en bu'st out cryin' en tie up her haid wid a cullud leaf, en tell her young Missis dat she feel moughty po'ly; dat she had a bunch er pains all ober her en a awful miz'ry in her back, en dat she didn' feel well, nohow.

“Dat night, dough de gal didn' espek ter see needer one er de mens, she kep' a lookin' fer 'em jes' de same ez ef she had knowed dey wuz sho'ly comin', en ebby time de dorgs bark she runned ter de do' ez hard ez she could split, en looked out. De naix mawnin' she was so pestered she wuz sick sho-nuff. W'ile she wuz onkomin' her young Missis' hyar she axt her would she en de young Marser (dat wuz gwine ter be) w'en dey driv out tergedder dat mawnin', dribe by de Hom'ny quarters en leab a baskit dar fer her. 'Twuz

dat baskit dat she 'poz'ted on de flo'. Her young Missis tole her, 'Yas, suttinly she would,' en tole her to g'long en fetch hit en put hit un'neaf de seat.

“'Peared lak ter Jerushe dat her young Missis en de young Marser (dat wuz gwine ter be) wuz gwine ter tek all day ter go en come. She gun ter watch fer 'em time dey lef' de house 'twel she seed 'em comin' back ag'in. Po' gal! she couldn' ten' ter her wuk fer lookin' up de lane, en time dey bofe driv in sight, dar she wuz, waitin' in de road ter open de gate fer 'em. W'en she seed dey had brung de baskit back wid 'em, she trombled en got queachy all ober; en w'en her young Missis tole her dat de two mens wa'n't at de quarters, en wa'n't eben

ou de premusses, en dat dar hogs en kattles hadn' been fed, ner nuttin' hadn' been 'tended ter, ner a lick er wuk hadn' been struck sence Saddy eb'nin', she reelt en skeerted 'roun' so she jamby fell un'neaf de gig w'eels (in dem days dey rid in gigs en rockerways sep'n w'en dar wuz mo' ter ride dan de gigs en rockerways hilt; den dey hitched up de carriages). W'en Jerushe come to she tole her young Missis all 'bout de sugar, en 'bout de two niggers ballin' dar eyes at wunner-nudder, en 'bout de s'pishuns dat had been 'sturbin' her min' ebber sence she stood en watched 'em gwine up de lane tergedder, en she say she b'leebed dat dey had bofe kilt wunner-nudder. D'reckly de gal tole her young Missis 'bout her s'pishuns de ve'y same



s'pishuns kotch holt er her, too, en 'pear lak ebbybody else tuck up de same notion, so dat 'fo' sunset dat same night de whole nayberhood, paterrollers en all, had tu'nt out ter he'p fin' de two missin' niggers. Dey s'arched ebby place in de rackerlackshun er de oldes' pusson, en atter de folks had all 'zorsted dar min's dey sont en got de paterroller's bloodhoun's (de bloodhoun's min's, you know, is up dar noses); en deze houn's scented de two mens, en tracked 'em ter de place whar I tole you 'bout up dar in de Cum'lan' Mount'ins.

“De strenkf er lub suttinly is pow'ful. Sometimes hit gibs folks fo'-sights dat's jes' ebby grain ez true ez dar hin'-sights; en dat gal Jeru-she's fo'-sights led her ter dem unbe-



knownst, dark, lonesome woods 'fo' eben de bloodhoun's had scented de place out. Yes, lub sho'ly mus' er led dat gal dar, widout co'se, ez I said 'fo', 'twuz cunjer.

"Gals en women folks suttinly is cur'ous, anyhow. Dey say dis yer gal nebber tuck no notus er de 'seechin' look er de firs' one dat wuz layin' on de aidge er de woods-paff, but dat she run pas' 'im, mos' 'st'acted, en flung herse'f on de turrer one's breas',—*de one dat was killt*,—en w'en she seed dat he wuz daid, Lawd! Lawd! her restress was turerble.

"Dar wuz de daid man's po' li'l' fice dorg settin' by 'im on his behime laigs, ha'f starbed. En dat dorg had dat much insticks dat nar' nudder pusson dar'sen't tetch his Marser's lich (a nig-



ger kin be a dorg's Marser, you know)  
sep'n dat gal Jerushe widout de dorg's  
r'arin' up at 'em lak he wuz gwine ter  
t'ar 'em all ter flinders. En hit suttinly  
was piterful ter see dat po' gal's restress.

“W'en all de yudders git dar wid de  
bloodhoun's, en seed de sight er po'  
Jerushe's 'flickshun hit werryd 'em all  
mought'ly, en bimeby-pres'n'y, w'en  
she wuz greebin' lak her heart would  
bu'st wide open, en dey wuz all er 'em  
tryin' ter comfort her, en wuz a sayin'  
'Po' gal! Po' gal!' ter her, en 'seech-  
in' her ter supjew her greebin', de  
li'l' yaller fice-dorg, wid tears in his  
eyes—fer dorgs kin cry—tu'nt 'roun'  
en 'gun ter lick de gal's han's, en hit  
'peared lak dat de lickin' er her lub-  
ber's dorg swaged her restress mo' dan  
anyt'ing dat de real folks had said, fer

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she nebber cleped a nudder soun' atter dat, but got quiet all ter a suddent. Den de folks went up ter her en try ter perswage her ter g'long back home wid 'em ter her young Missis, en tole her how dat Ung' Tim en Ung Sam wuz gwine ter stay dar wid her beau 'twel de umbertekers come wid de coffin ter put 'im in.

“ But Jerushe nebber 'spon ter nuttin', dey said. She nebber budge, ner nebber tuck no notus er none er dar arguefymments. Some er de mens thunk de gal's worryments mus' er stunted her ter mek her lay so still all uver suddent. De maj'stret, dough, thunk diffunt fum de yudders, en he spuck up en say, he don' bleebe she wuz stunted; he bleebed she wuz playin' 'possum. Anyhow, he say, w'edder




she is er w'edder she ain't, he ain't got no time ter fool wid a good-fer-nuttin', lazy, stubbo'n nigger. Wid dat he kotch holt er bofe er de gal's arms en drug her ret up offn de corpse. Hit suttinly wuz skan'lus in de maj's-tret ter do po' Jerushe dat away! fer she wa'n't stunted; needer wuz she playin' 'possum—Jerushe wuz daid!

“W'en de maj'stret seed dat de po' gal wuz sho'-nuff daid, he look moughty shame-face en hang-dorg 'bout de way he had ack; but I'll say dis much fer 'im; he suttinly spuck out honerble lak a gemman en say 'fo' all han's er de mens—‘My Gord! my Gord!! I nebber would hab bleebed dat a nigger could a died fum grief lak dis, ef I hadn' a seed hit wid my own eyes.’

“Den de maj'stret tuck de gal up jes' ez sof' en gentle ez ef she'd been a w'ite lady en lay her back 'longside er her po' daid lubber.


“W'en de maj'stret had fixed 'em tergedder sides by sides he looked down at 'em bofe fer a minit in a deep studdy; den he retched ober de gal-corpse en onlinkt a piece er de man-corpse's brass watch-chain en meajered hit 'roun' de size er de gal-corpse's finger; den he tuck his jack-knife en enj'ined de chain-links tergedder, en meked a ring outn hit. Den he put de ring dat he meked in de man-corpse's han'. W'en he had done dat, he tuck off his own hat en looked 'roun' solemn at de yudders en say—‘Gemmen, bemobe yo' hats, ef you please.’ En de gemmen all bemobed dar hats.



Den he rollt his eyes up ter Heaben ter call de good Lawd's detenshun down ter 'em. Den he opened his mouf en spuck de wuds. En dar 'pon de hill-top, un'neaf de moughty trees, way up in de Cum'lan' Mount'ins, whar dis 'storical juel wuz sho-'nuff fought (no p'intin' in de a'r—no missin' er de mark, en huggin' er wunner-nudder atterwuds) de maj'stret spuck de wuds er de Law en de Gorspel—en mar'ed de two corpses ter wunner-nudder in one flesh, dat is, ef a maj's-tret er de law en de wuds er de chutch en a weddin' ring kin mek a mar'i'ge. De maj'stret hilt de husband corpse's brack stiff han' en meked hit wiggle de weddin' ring on de wife-corpse's li'l' yaller limber finger.

“W'en de maj'stret wuz thoo wid

de sumery en had denounc't 'em bofe ez man en wife, he said : 'Gemmen, let us all kneel in praher.' En dar on de brack ye'th, wid de blood marks bespattered all 'roun' 'em, wid dar haid's byar, de gemmens all kneelt en said de Lawd's Praher—dat is, dem dat knowed de Lawd's Praher, said hit; en dem dat didn' know hit follered de yudders de bes' dey could. De po' dorg sot en watcht 'em, but needer did he bark, ner needer did he w'ine, but he trombled all ober, dough, jes' lak he had a hard, shekin' ager. De hosses en de mules whar de mens had rid up dar on, en whar wuz tied ter de trees, stomped en stomped dar hoofs en whickered en whinnied w'ile dey wuz all a prayin', 'twel you'd a thunk de witches wuz a ridin' 'em. De



yolps en de cries er de blue-mottled en  
brack-en-tan, lank-shin houn' dorgs,  
ez de fox doubled on 'em, echoed en  
echoed thoo de trees wid de wuds  
'Dy Kingdom come, Dy will be done.'  
Hit suttinly wuz a solemn, skeerish  
time. But I gwine ter tell you all  
one t'ing, jes' ez sho' ez you en me is  
bawn, en dat is dis: dar's gwine ter be  
one 'sprized nigger ober yonder w'en  
he gits 'cross de ribber Jorden, en  
clumbs up de golden styars en gits safe  
inside de promis' lan', en fin's out  
whose been layin' 'long side er 'im  
down dar in de Cum'lan' Mount'ins.

"De mens tried ter perswage de daid  
nigger's po' li'l' ha'f-starbed dorg, wid  
wittles en w'istles bofe, ter g'long  
back home wid 'em. Den dey start  
ter tek 'im en kyar him 'long any



how, but de po' li'l' feller howled so piterbul dat dey all went 'long back widout 'im, en lef' im' dar keepin' comp'ny wid de bride en groom 'twel Ung Sam en de yudders could git dar wid de coffin.

“Ez dey wuz all ridin' long by dat yudder Joneswille nigger de maj'stret got offn his horse en tuck out his tickler, en gib de po' man a dram, den he gib de tickler ter one er de mens en tole 'im ter stay dar wid de po' suff'rer en do all he kin fer 'im 'twel de doctor en de steer kyart could git dar.

“W'ile de maj'stret wuz giben de man deze yer orders, a nudder one er de mens wuz tellin' de Joneswille nigger 'boutn de mar'in'. Well, suh, ef you b'leebe me, dat dyin' nigger's eyes 'jes blar'd en glar'd en wall'd up lak a wil'

tagger's, en fo' dey all knowed w'at he wuz gwine ter do, he jukt up his gun, he did, en p'inted hit stret to'ds de maj'stret. P'intin' wuz all de po' nigger's strenkf hilt out tu do, fer his finger trombled ez hit tetched 'g'inst de trigger, en his gun en his jaw bofe drapped suddent. His eyes rollt back-'ards lak a caged lion's dat kyan' he'p hitse'f, en his sperit lipped outn his brack body wid a roar.

"Bofe de Joneswille niggers wuz corpses. One baskit er sugar on de she'f en de yudder one on de flo'.

"Way up dar on de top er de hill ter dis day is two grabes layin' sides by sides. De bride en de groom sleeps tergedder peacerbul in wunner-nudder's arms in one er de grabes. En in de turrer grabe dat yudder po' fersooken,

lonesome Joneswille nigger twisses en tosses en tu'ns 'bout uver day all by his po' lonesome se'f, wid murder in his heart, en liis sugarcorn on de flo', en uver nights his oures'less sperit ha'nts de woods en prowls 'roun' 'boutn de who'e place whar dat turrerble juel wuz fought en whar de soun' er dar guns wuz echoed.

“ All th'ee er de corpses wuz bur'ed de same day, but de niggers ain't neber got thoo habin' funerals ober 'em all yit. En de consequenshals er dis juel is gwine ter las' plum 'twel de goats en de sheeps is 'wided up on Judgement Day en one er de yudder is put out ter pastur'. Fer dat ginerashun er niggers en ebby ginerashun er niggers dat's been sence den, is had foughts en quar'ls, en 'sputes, en fusses



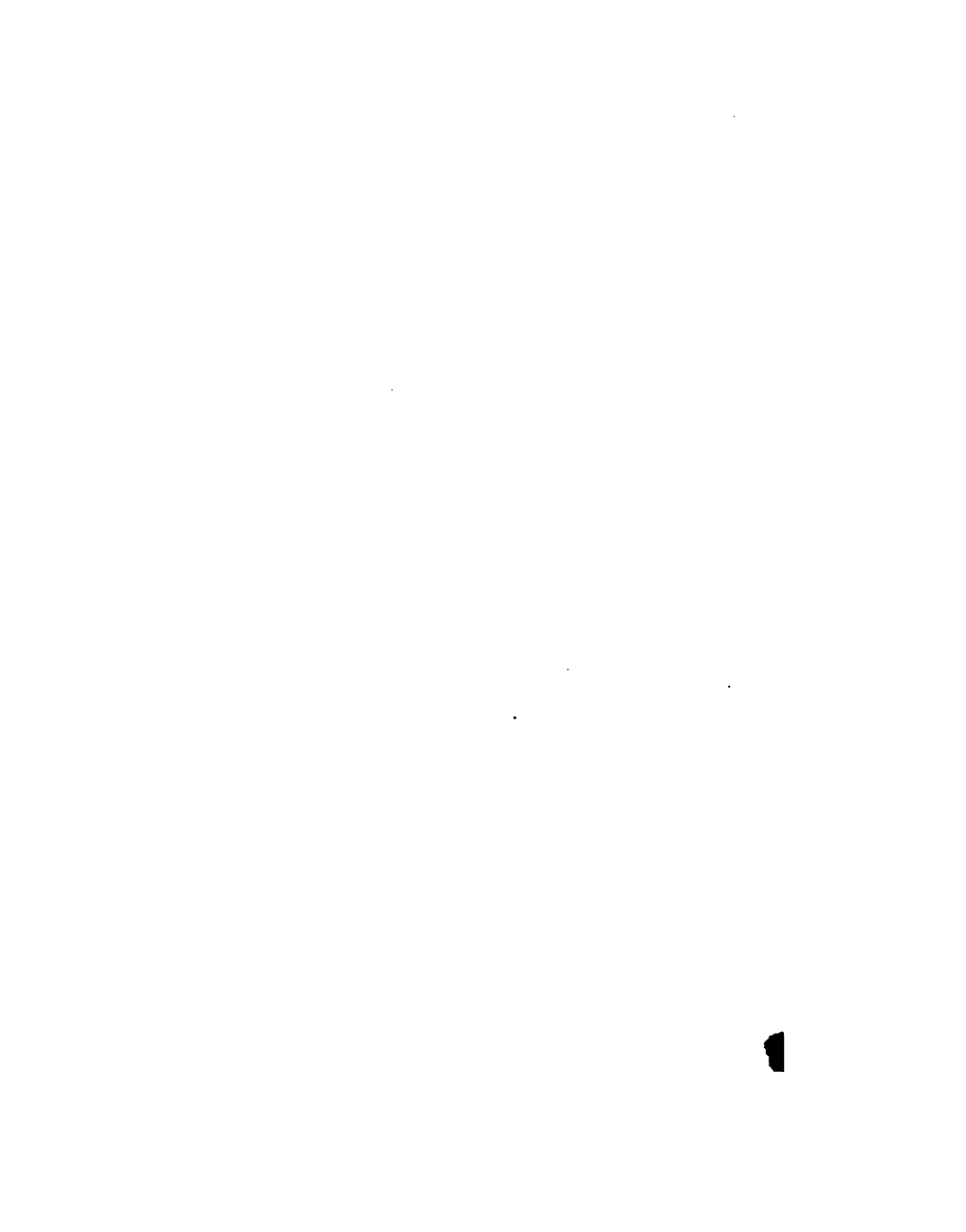
'bout 'who 'gun de qua'rl' en 'whose fault hit all wuz'; but de mos' er 'em dough, I mus' say, in gen'ally puts *all de blame on de po' gal*.

"Aun' Judy say she wuz out at de wood-pile choppin' up her light'ood fer mawnin' w'en de two Jonesville niggers come long by her wid dar guns, but she say she 'low ter herse'f dat dey wuz bofe ruunin' way fum dar owners, en wuz gwine on thoo de lines whar all de niggers you know is free niggers. She say dat dat wuz de reason she didn' say nuttin' 'tall ter her w'ite folks ner ter nobody else 'bout seein' 'em. She say dat de nigger dat got kilt firs' tu'nt roun' atter he had passed by her, lak he had a resentment dat sump'n wuz gwine ter happen, en say ter her, 'Ger-by, Aun'

Judy; tek keer er yo'se'f, en gib my lub ter mammy, en 'member me ter Sis Abby.' Den she say de yudder one he come 'long en looked back ober his shoul'er en say, 'Ger-by, Aun' Judy, tell all our folks, Howdy.' Aun' Judy say she say ter herse'f, 'twa'n't none er her bizness ter be tellin' w'at she seed, en so atter dat she nebber thunk no mo' 'bout hit, she jes' kep' on splittin' up her kin'lin' en puttin' up her light'ood en singin' 'W'en I kin read my title cl'ar.'''











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